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THE PIERCE FAMILY

Unclean and Spotted from the World

By

MRS. WILLIAM BECKMAN

Author of

Backsheesh, A Woman's Wanderings

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Mrs. William Beckman

To the lover of Nature, the lover of Love, and the lover of Truth: The descriptions of travel, the journal, and all of the letters and incidents as given in the book are absolutely true. It was ordained that some must suffer, and one, so far as human knowledge extends, goes unpunished. Verily truth at times seems strangest of all things in this strange life of ours.

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Unclean and Spotted from the World

I

"Oh silent land to which we move,
Enough if there alone be love!"

"Go and keep yourself unclean and spotted from the world."

Clear and distinct came the words, in a shrill childish voice, while a flush of anger burned in the cheeks, and the blue eyes flashed a look of scorn, as with a toss of her yellow curls the child pushed her small companion from her with a gesture of contempt.

"What is the trouble, Ruth?" asked a kindly voice from the vine-wreathed veranda.

"I was preachin' to her and told her what the minister said to us this morning. She was naughty and needed to be talked to," answered the child.

"But you did not say it right. The minister said, 'Keep yourselves clean and unspotted from the world.'"

"Well, I won't change it for she does not keep clean. She hates to be washed and likes to play in the sand and get mud-spots on her clothes. So p'raps it is good to leave my talk as it is," and Ruth settled herself on the steps of the veranda with an air of one who had done her whole duty.

"What were you and Alice quarreling about?" asked her mother.

"Oh, nuthin', only she wanted me to go and pick water-cresses and I wouldn't. She teased me so I pushed her away. I didn't want to get wet and muddy so she has gone away by herself."

Ruth picked up her pet kitten and twisted its tail until it meowed pitifully. Then sang out lustily, "Don't talk about sufferin' here below."

"Don't dear, you hurt me as much as you hurt the kitten."

"Hurt you, mama," cried the impulsive child, throwing the kitten sprawling on the ground, and rushing up the steps threw herself into her mother's arms. "Why mama? Why does it hurt you? I've heard you sing that song often."

"Yes, but the other line tells you of 'Loving Jesus,' and does not mean that you must be cruel."

"Well, I can't talk about things or sing either of something I know nuthin' about when I see things I know. But what can I say about lovin' somebody I'm not acquainted with?"

"You will know better, dear, when you are older, but you must listen closely and you will remember the sermons, and I know you will be a better child and everybody will love you all the more if you are sweet and kind. You must not be cruel to your kitten nor cross to Alice."

"I can be good and I will try; but I don't want to go to church where even you look drowsy, mama; and it is stupid in there. I can't remember what the preacher says for I look out through the window and wish I were up in the trees with the birds or lying on the grass listening to them for they sing and are glad. They have their meetin's too when every little bird talks and does not have to sit and listen to some older bird and there is never a mama to tell them to keep quiet, 'You must be seen and not heard'; but everyone is a preacher and chatters and sings his own tale and knows what he is talkin' about probably as well as the preacher does."

"Why Ruth. Where do you get such ideas?"

"Oh, I don't know. I just think them out and I know it is all true. I love to watch them. They don't have to listen to stories of things that happened so long ago that they just guess if it ever happened. The birds do things they want to and that is why they are always happy. Mama I get tired listening to 'In the beginnin',' and then other times we have the 'begats.' I get sick of it. I don't want to hear about the 'begats.' I want to be out-doors and know about the things that are here, the birds, flowers and children suit me."

"But Ruthie you must not say these things," counseled her mother, and she, wise in her loving motherhood said not too much, but tenderly strove to guide the impetuous child aright until Ruth, begging forgiveness, said:

"I want you to come out with me. Let us sit under the trees. Let us forget the sermons and just look up at the blue skies through the trees and sing 'Nearer.' That song, when you sing it makes me feel better than sermons, for then I want to be good and never again be naughty if I can help it."

It was many years after that afternoon, in reading over some old letters, one written by her mother, recounting the child's rather odd and wilful ways, to her absent father that Ruth came across it and others recalling much of her childhood days.

Yes, she murmured, I was the child; wilful in many ways, thinking my own thoughts, rejecting much that was not according to my childish ideas. How I hated the wasted Sundays as I thought them, listening to conundrums about Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden, the serpent which I hated, and the apple I wanted and didn't blame Eve for eating, only I wondered why she was so anxious to divide it with Adam. But that was not so bad as the "begats," Seth, Noah and a lot of others I could not remember, and the Ark and two by twos we learned so long ago while yearning for the beautiful living things that were of such unbounded interest to me.

Yet, even if wearying and tiresome to me then, how I love to recall those dear, sweet days, and my heart is very tender when I think of her who tried hard to give me a portion of faith—the faith which passeth all understanding, and the memory of my indifference is bitter. The gentle words and pained look in her dear eyes are clearer to me now than then, and cut scars on my heart that time can never efface. Now I know too well that it is too late, for the sweet voice is stilled and the dear eyes are closed forever.

There are many changes since then. The tiny brook where Aileen, my dearest playmate, and I played, seems smaller to me now than it did when we tossed pebbles into the clear depths and made boats of paper and cast them loose upon its swift ripples.

My life has broadened and deepened and there has been sorrow enough and not too much joy. But in looking backward how I love the sunlight on the ripples and sparkling waters of that brook that meant so much to me, rushing on

and on, ever to some unknown fairy region, to my mind, and the longing to go to sail away on those waters like the frail boats grew as I grew, and made me make strange resolves in my mind as to what I should do when old enough to leave school.

There was much to look forward to. Everything was new, and it was a buoyant, exuberant life that Aileen and I enjoyed. We had our disputes, for she did not take kindly to her books, and I was prone to lecture her. But she was wilful and cared more for out-door life than anything or any pursuit within the house. I was content with my books and my music. She loved the flowers and was interested in the myriads of insect life that were in evidence everywhere to her quick eyes.

"Why," she said once to me, "I'd rather lie under a tree and listen to the hum of the bees, the insects, the slatting of the katydids and crickets, the soft, sweet music of the wires that the winds touch and send the faint quivering sounds down to me, than listen to your—not always perfect touch upon the piano."

"But, Aileen, we must learn, and cannot know unless we try."

"I'm not going to try. The birds know how to sing. They do not sit by the hour trying octaves. Kittens can talk to each other; so do the little chickens. They know what the mother hen says as soon as they're hatched. The goslings know how to swim without being taught, and all the animals know each other without an introduction. Why, my pony only the other day met another one on the road when I was riding him. He stopped, they rubbed noses, and in some way knew they were old friends, for the strange pony turned and trotted contentedly along. He wasn't worried about position, money or 'our set.' They liked each other and that was enough."

"Why, Aileen, what nonsense you are talking. Our mamas could not allow us to trot away with strange children. It would never do, they might be very naughty."

"Well, I'm thinking it all out, and am studying about it, and I, too, shall know for myself sometime."

All these ideas were discussed when we were mere slips of girls, and all of Aileen's spare time away from school was

devoted to out-door life. Her one gift was sketching and painting, and as she grew, she was allowed all the spare time possible. She was an artist by nature and instinct. Her passion was nature in all its moods and phases, and when we were yet children she said: "When I am tired of painting these things and can do it to suit me, especially those gnarled old trees, I shall go and paint the cedars of Lebanon."

"Of Lebanon," I echoed in astonishment.

"Yes, that is why I am working so hard."

"But how are you going to paint trees on the other side of the world?"

"Never mind. When I am ready to do them I will be there," she answered.

"Yes; in an airship, and drop down on one of your air castles," I said.

So we would talk, and I would humor her fancies, and the hours we passed talking and speculating on the future were many indeed. Life was not mere existence to her. She seemed buoyed up with an indefinable, delightful, joyous spirit, which shone in her eyes and bubbled from her lips in song and laughter.

The blue skies and warm, bright sunshine which were never dim or dulled for her half the year round seemed to have given a certain warmth to her nature. She reveled in each new day, and the sun was seldom up before she was dressed and out in the unclouded splendor through all the golden hours, until the sun changed into a fiery disk and the cool blue mists of night shut like a dream-curtain the crimson glory.

Then, again, when the moon shone a bright and radiant globe in the star-sprinkled heavens, it touched another chord of her being and at times when we were wont to sit on the vine-covered veranda talking, crooning some quaint melody, or in silence, I have seen her eyes fill with tears and drop unheeded as she thought.

Hers was a sensitive nature, and I dreaded the future for her before I scarcely knew why. Her capacity for enjoyment, her delight in everything that was beautiful, the sudden changes in her moods, a shrinking from all pain or sorrow made me often wonder how it would fare with her if trouble or wrong ever came to her.

"Do you know, Ruth, that there are times when my soul seems drawn up, up out of my body when I gaze on the dear twinkling stars? What mean the strange thoughts, the thrill that is like an electric shock, only it is sweet, for it touches my heart on nights like this. Foolish you think them, I know, but there is something appealing and comforting, too," she babbled on one evening in a like strain, and added:

"And I want to tell you something else, Ruth," she said dreamily. "That star, the middle one in the handle of the great dipper, is where I'm going when I die. And if I go first, you can look up at my home afterwards and remember where I am."

These were her fanciful hours, just as she had her freak days; one I often recall. We were wandering along the sloping hills, away from the rest of the party who were spending a day in the foothills. We were talking of Jacob's Ladder and the Pillow of Stone, and she told me to lie down and try a stone for a pillow. Looking up the mountain slope, she said "They are God's ladders to climb to the skies."

Suddenly she cried, "I am going to try it. I am going up this beautiful stairway, among the blossoms and bees. You stay here until I get to the blue sky up there where the white clouds hide the top of the ladder. I'll go until I can hear the angels sing. Then I will come back and sing to you the songs I hear. I know the music is grand, and I want to see their wings. You know when we played meetin' the other night, Frank prayed and said, 'Dear God, when I get to heaven I want to be an angel with great wings, tipped with the colors of the rainbow.' Well, I do not want to wait. I think I can see them if I go now before they go back to their dear little white homes that are so bright when the sun goes down; for you know that is the time God turns on the electric lights in each house so that every angel may know the way to his home."

She was away like a flash, up the grassy slopes, and I waited patiently until the evening shadows shut out the rosy light and it grew dark under the trees. Suddenly a sound, a wail it seemed to me, struck terror to my heart. I sprang up and fled down the manzanita-lined pathway with sobbing breath and the fear that something was pursuing me. Then

my dress was caught with a terrible grasp and I fell senseless, where they found me, after searching and calling for us in vain. My yell of fright brought them and they found me with my dress caught on a bush, and farther up, Aileen, also, quietly sleeping, the angels and stars forgotten.

II

"Hath this fellow no feeling of his business?
Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness."

"Jack, I dropped in for a moment to tell you I'm going away. I am going to leave care, which I have lately been thinking of only in capital letters, to bury itself in some grave or groove. There is but little difference in the spelling, you know; and if I do not get out of the aforesaid groove it will end in the former for me, if I go on in the same old routine."

"Going to replace the old raveled sleeve of care with a new one, Frank?" said his friend.

"Yes. I'm going to bury it, and with the taps shall pray that it never be resurrected. It has served faithfully for years and is old enough to be on the retired list upon half pay, if it refuses to stay dead. I want a change and a new recruit for the next year or so, and I want you to come with me. I need you. You will serve as sauce and butter to the sometimes dry toast of travel. I want a companion, and I need you. The time is now; the golden grains of opportunity are slipping by. I am weary of the life I have known. The tangled sophistries of the world choke my soul, and I must get away from it for a while. I long for freedom, the freedom of the mesas, the rush and whirr of wheels over deserts and mountains, the joy of change and relief from one's environments."

"You're a queer fellow, Frank. Do you suppose you are going to get out of the civilized world. If so, where is your Ultima Thule?"

"No; but I am going to try the dolce far niente for a time. I shall go wherever my fancy dictates. Mexico first—dear land of manana. There shall be only tomorrows for me for a while, I assure you. Instead of the mild effort at Bohemianism in a frappé wine now and then, and a petit souper by people with money here, I shall see again the real thing in the Latin quarter that bears no resemblance to American Bohe-

mianism. Then the trattiors and cafes of the spaghetti-loving Italians, where smoke and garlic are abundant, and odors told and untold are omnipresent. But even so, in all its best or worst, I will find a sort of people who do not take life seriously, but live each day as it should be lived, without too much thought or care for the next one to come."

"So you think you will find a people who enjoy life and find their daily bread showered down on them, as the children of Israel?"

"No. I do not expect miracles in this age of electricity and wireless telegraphy. But I have been across the Atlantic once before, you know, and I shall find it different from this eternal rush and struggle for gold or supremacy."

"Would you have a man lead an idle, aimless life?"

"Not necessarily idle nor aimless, but with less of the desire to gain a little more than some other fellow, and content with a competence, for ambition crowds out the nobler part of man frequently, and one desire gained is succeeded by something more difficult and less easy to obtain. Few are content to stop before they find their Waterloos. Death is the only sure thing, and that often comes the quicker for the rush and struggle in trying to reach the goal."

"When a man's business commands his entire attention all of his time, what is he to do but endure or enjoy as best he may," said Jack. "I know of no other reasonable way."

"Well, I am going to try a more reasonable way, for I am dividing my affairs among several people who will not find the work too arduous, and some of the money I have made I am going, by travel, to convert into mind. I want diversion—new thoughts and new ideas. I want to see people; to know a few, perhaps, who are content, who will rise when they have slept enough, who take time to eat and who work in order that there may be enough and to spare, but who are not possessed of the spirit of unrest—of saving and hoarding gold. I know a man who is very wealthy who eats a hurried breakfast, gulps down a cup of coffee and a bite of toast. 'I have no time to talk,' he tells his wife; is up and away to his office as fast as electricity can take him; returning at night, eats his dinner in silence, too tired to converse, and retires only to re-live every day the same routine. So

the years are going fast. A great deal of the beautiful in life is unknown to him. Avarice and its twin—ambition—have mastered the man. He and his family are sacrificed to the Moloch of promise. For the future always holds a promise of something different. When once the germ disease of avarice gets in the brain nothing but death can effect a cure."

"I am sorry, Frank. You will have to find someone else. My environments suit me pretty well, and I enjoy my life, prosaic, as you please to call it; chacun a son gout, you know. I hope you will enjoy your freedom and come back cured."

"Cured of what?"

"Some odd emotional vagaries that possess your usually clear brain," said Jack.

"I don't want to be cured; don't want to be unnecessarily sane. I may not possess a crazy 'bug' because I want something outside the daily life of him who lives, works, and draws his salary. I may come back and put the halter about my neck, but I shall not be in a hurry, I fancy. The tramp life will suit me for a time. I have envied the tramps at times, lying on the cool grass placidly enjoying the fragrant winds and the cool shade of the trees, where the dandelions make yellow splashes and the hoary-headed elders, showing above the young ones, whitening in the sun, show how short-lived they are and the need of making the most of our time. So, before my thatch begins to whiten and get thin, I shall let others do the hurrying and simply enjoy my allotted hours of idleness as they appeal to me."

"Well, my boy, go and have your fill of the manana land. Have your fill of travel also; cast dignity to the devil; be wild and free; go back to the primitive once more; forget the eternal grind, as you are pleased to term it; take life in big doses, not on the homeopathic plan; enjoy the Egyptian sun sets, they will be more numerous than the sunrises that you will see, I think. And when your wings are tired, just flop down here again and we will jog on contentedly for the rest of our lives. By the way, if you are yearning for someone to go with you ask Fred Marshall, he is out of sorts. A disappointment, or something, and I learn he is leaving very soon."

"Is that true? If you will not come with me I will see if he and I cannot go together. I shall write you when on my travels, just to divert your mind now and then, you know."

III

"The worldly Hope men set their hearts upon
Turns ashes—or it prospers; and anon,
Like snow upon the desert's dusty face
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone."

Edith Hammond Writes to Her Friend, Aileen Livingston

I must give you the details of this eventful afternoon, dear Aileen. Mama was vexed with me because I refused to go to an afternoon card party with some of my girl friends. I refused, and said to them: "I want to be out in God's sunshine and have it in my face and in my heart. You girls may go and have your progressive whist or euchre hours under the gas-light, in close rooms, but I prefer the breath of the lupins out there on the hills and the purifying atmosphere from the crisp salt waters. I will drink it in and be glad. It will be more beneficial to me than that which you will imbibe, however fine the liquid or the quality of cut-glass.

"You can progress in that style if you like, but you know summer is my Lenten season and I am not going to any dances or card parties. I will do penance in other ways. Duplicate whist with some of those mentally unhinged women you are constantly meeting? No! I like easier methods. If I must wear peas in my shoes I will parboil them first, while observing the letter of the law. I do not see that the time of the year has much to do with it if one observes the rule. Summer time is proper for Lent, anyway, according to my ideas," I told them.

They insisted I was silly, but I was not to be coerced; told them I was not going to tax my mind with echoes, fourth-leads, tierces and sequences; that I feared the consequences if I yielded, and that none of those nerve-disturbing things could tempt me. I told them I would neither lead or follow them into temptation or encourage them in sinning against heaven by killing the glorious afternoon, and shutting myself

up in close rooms, however attractive they might be. "Be off with you," I said. "I shall out and tell my secrets to the bees."

Then they clamored for the secrets. I agreed to tell them one. It is this: "I am learning better every day how to enjoy life as each day goes by, and my name will not figure among those present at the 'charming afternoon' which will appear in the social column of the papers." I was called a goose, and several complimentary names before they gave me up as hopeless.

I hurried away as soon as they left, and drove a long distance out in the country. The afternoon was perfect and satisfied every instinct of my soul. When tired of driving I drew up under the shade of a great live oak, and tying my horse, gave myself up to the beauty and the serenity of the place.

Resting on the flower-strewn grass, where the sun filtered through the foliage, I breathed a sigh of thankfulness that life had for this one day at least given me the opportunity of doing what I wanted to do. My conscientious scruples were profitable to me. It was not that I really objected to an afternoon with the girls, but I was more in need of the quieting influences I knew would be mine, away from the tongues that vex one's soul at times. So I gave myself up to the warmth and soothing restfulness of the afternoon.

Somewhere, up among the branches of the tree, a saucy jay-bird was jawing and scolding because of my intrusion, and a tiny linnet was singing softly and sweetly from a fragrant acacia near by. There was a hum of insects in the air; the bees droning from one flower to another, heavy winged and laden with their cargoes of honey.

Somewhere, further up the hill-side, a mocking-bird was singing his heart out in the fullness of joy, that came in trills and gurgling sounds so nearer heaven than I, for he was at peace with the whole world and himself, and poured out the throbbing pulsing notes, lending an additional charm to the calm afternoon. The busy wheels and cogs of thought and worry relaxed and moved slowly. I was conscious of but one thought, one feeling, in the delightful languor that saturated

my being, and that was the thought of you; and wishing that you, of all the world, were with me.

A faint humming sound, sweet and low in its vibrations, came to my ears, a sort of an accompaniment to my thoughts. It was the wires overhead responding to the soft breezes that touched them gently and lovingly, and the sweet pulsing sounds found a responsive chord in my heart, and I lay listening, my soul steeped in the delightful calm of the hour. I wondered if you were not sending thought messages to me, and that the winds had brought them and they were thrilling me with the soft cadence that comes from your love, which I feel and understand.

There are mysteries which we do not understand in nature, perhaps never will. And while I'm idly speculating a woodpecker high up on an old tree gives his telegraphic signals in short, sharp taps. Instantly, but faintly heard, comes the answering tap-tap, tap-tap, of his mate. And soon, with a flash of wings she is beside him clinging with clinched feet in the rough bark, head downward, discussing the contents of last year's acorn.

I realize that there are signals in nature we are not acquainted with. But that does not prove they do not exist. I love the companionship of mystery. There is something that responds to an inner-self hardly yet fathomed within me. But this I know, my pulse is beating, the restless blood surging in my veins is longing for something inexplicable to me now, but it is calling, calling me. Some magnetic current is striving to make itself understood. The wires and the birds have startled me into a realizing sense of something which is coming to me, and I am trying to give you a telegraphic signal by letter—a rather plain tap-tap of my pen, scratching my ideas to you in the vain hope that you will interpret the strange feeling I have in writing this.

I returned late, hoping that my sin of omission would have been forgotten. Not so. Mama was waiting for me and told me she did not approve of my actions lately.

"What ails you, Edith?" she said. "You seem entirely changed. You used to enjoy going out with your friends. Now you seem to ignore all social duties, and it displeases me very much."

I told her I was wearied beyond telling of teas and receptions; that the crush and idle talk was only a little worse than the card parties; that I preferred fresh air, and then she grew sarcastic, and said: "Sunburn and freckles are better, I suppose."

You know mama's delightful air when I rebel against conventionalities.

"Hereditary aloofness in my make-up is not inherited from you, mama," I said to her. "A little bit of blood of one of my primitive ancestors is awakening and stirring in my veins, bidding me break away from the life you have lived and I, too, have been compelled to endure up to this time. Now it must be changed. I want a wider horizon; one that seems glowing and shimmering in the distance. The East is calling to the West. I dream of Nomad's fires, gleaming in the dusk of evenings in strange forests. I want the unknown and the blessed possibilities of change from the eternal sameness of the life I am living, which must have been intended for some other purpose than the one I know now."

Then she seemed to have a new idea. "Edith, when a girl like you experiences a sudden change of heart, and all at once discovers that there are birds, bees and flowers in the world—that the skies are blue, and the sun red at sunset, and the moon round when it is full—there is, to a dead moral certainty, a man in the case. I did not know you had a particular penchant for anyone, yet you have all the symptoms." Mama can be angelic when she chooses.

I told her I was acquainted with some kinds of birds, but was pretty sure I did not belong to the black-bird species, because I did not enjoy the crowd, the chatter and noise. I can enjoy life without the company of a man, or the company of some of those Postum-brained nervous girls, who turn mental somersaults in trying to solve the question as to whether a ten-spot will take a trick after the higher cards have been played.

That roused mama again, for I had hit at her favorite beverage, for she is too "nervy" to drink coffee, so I had to take another turn.

"There, dear," I said to her, "drink any kind of beverage you wish; drown your cares in the cup that invigorates but

does not inebriate. Only remember that care is a pretty hard thing to drown, and sometimes outlasts those who try to murder it. But let us forget all this nonsense in a good cup of tea, for the present."

"My dear, if only you would not try to aggravate me and be more like other girls. I cannot understand why you prefer the country and want to be so much alone."

"Probably not, mama; but I do not care to imitate. I do not want to be just like other girls. I am myself, and am happier, I think, than if I lived according to your ideas, for it would consist in doing, as a rule, the things I do not want to do, in order to have the things I do not want."

"I do not quite know what you mean, Edith."

"I think it is not necessary to read the handwriting on the wall through an interpreter. It is simply this: you do not care for anything in the world but society. Your sole ambition is to keep within the charmed circle, as you think it is. You are more than satisfied with the never varying rounds of dinners, theatre parties and other functions. You think I ought to be content with these things, and a possible husband, belonging to the same circle, with the same life ahead of me that yours has been, which is pleasant enough in its way. But it is not according to my ideas of a life of contentment, usefulness or happiness."

"You are utterly without reason, my dear. Your ideas of a simple life are senseless. You have always had the luxuries and therefore have not the faintest idea of what life would be without them. Your idea of a different life would mean a few less imported gowns, less of parties and theatres, I suppose."

"Not altogether, mama. But I would like to know people who think about things other than the where-withal they shall be clothed, fed or amused. I think I am far happier and healthier in the open air than the girls who were here after me to go with them and pass the sweet, bright hours in artificially lighted rooms, with closed windows and drawn curtains, where they breathe the refuse of each other's breath in rooms malodorous with cut and decaying flowers."

"Edith, what has changed you so much? You have always enjoyed these same things you now condemn."

"Perhaps I am learning new ones. I certainly am wearied of progressive luncheons and other affairs that mean anything but progression in health, intellect or wisdom, which have scant opportunity within the darkened chambers where the crowds prattle without thought or reason—for that matter, with never a single uplifting thought."

"In the abstract you may be correct, but in practice it won't work. You cannot live up to your ideas unless you go beyond the pale of civilization; and I am at a loss to know why you had a change of heart. You seemed to be very happy and to enjoy yourself earlier in the season."

"I saw enough of the social life and it has not left a very pleasant impression. I can see and enjoy another kind of life, one that is not associated with odors of veiled musk and stagnant wines. I prefer the life I have decided upon. I am going to give up society. I am not like the average girl, and there is no use trying. I cannot be satisfied with criticizing my friends and their style of dress. The eternal themes that absorb the matron,—dress, domestics and disease, the extravagances of some, the economy of others, the table linen, silver and the wines, are a never-ending subject for praise or censure. I know I am profanely frivolous because I do not care for the accessories, if they are dainty, sweet and clean. If the effect is satisfactory I never consider the value, but enjoy the dinner and company, if they are worth while. I know you would like me to be more like Ruth. She ought to have been your daughter, she would have satisfied your every instinct. I know how you enjoy discussing these things with her. But for me, I seem to know instinctively the shoddy and the shams of life without going into details. If the punch is made with Apollinaris instead of champagne I might or not know the difference, and accept the fact without living it over and talking about it days after."

"I do not think, my dear, that your life would be the worse if you copied after Ruth somewhat."

"Well you know, mama dear, that I am not a copyist, and I know, too, that she is built on an entirely different plan. Apollinaris, tea and toast are according to her taste, and have a sort of religious flavor. I know she thinks a Bohemian

is a first cousin to Satan himself, while I find the idea of Bohemia rather alluring. It would be a change you know."

Then she took me to task for censuring others, and wound up by saying that if I were more like Ruth it would be far better for me; that Ruth would not sit with her feet on the window-sill like a man.

"Then she can never enjoy herself half as well as the man and myself," I retorted, and then told her there was no use trying to reconstruct me.

"I am going to get all the good I can out of life, and you must not expect me to sit up straight and keep my hands and arms in place like the doll you once gave me. I used to fix her arms and legs in one position and she would sit and stare at me until I jerked her into some other position. And it made me so angry because she wouldn't wiggle her toes that I pounded them off."

"Yes, I remember your dolls never lasted very long. Now, Ruth's were always kept immaculate, even as she herself was and is now."

"Yes, she pretends to be sweet and modest, and does it pretty well, too. But she is normal, I think, and is probably as naked under those dainty frills as the rest of us. She pretends to be good and passes for the real coin among the guinea-hen crowd she plays to,—those antiques who chatter and cackle about the times when they were young, when girls didn't put their feet on chairs or window-sills or wear knickerbockers, play golf or do anything but attend to the affairs of the house.

"Perhaps I am too matter of fact, mama. I do not play to the gallery for applause and then turn somersaults when the door is locked. I am too natural to be anything for effect. I know Ruth thinks me beyond redemption. She used to call me a worm of the earth. Perhaps I am, but being a worm or otherwise, as the savants may decide, I am at least discriminating, and the saving grace of humor in me keeps me from being miserable or following in her footsteps. At least I am pretty sure that no ancestor of mine ever lived in an Indian jungle or belonged to the ape worshippers. Perhaps hers did. Hence her evident affinity for some of those ape-like creatures she is so fond of associating with and quoting.

She is a good deal like the young minister, she is constantly with, who wears his hair parted in the middle and keeps it smooth and slick in a rather saintly way; but the blue glints in his black hair are indicative of a dash of something in his nature opposite the saintly order."

"Edith, you positively shock me. How do you know anything about blue glints and a tendency to evil because the man happens to be neat and tidy in his personal habits?"

"I spend some of my time studying human nature as well as tramping about in an aimless way, as you are pleased to think, mama, and I think because he affects the law-giver of Sinai and wears his collar buttoned in the back it does not change the whole nature of the man."

"I am sure you misjudge the man, dear, and I wish you would try to learn from him, for his is the mission, and the privilege to teach, to instruct, to soften the pain and misery of the world and to help us bear the idea of the unfathomed mystery of the other world."

"Yes, I know, and his voice is soft and pleasant, soothing to some, I fancy. But I honor him with my doubts. He is very fond of giving me choice morsels from the Ten Commandments that are terse, concise and epigrammatic, but seem to forbid a good many things that I rather enjoy."

"With all your foolishness, my child, I did not think you were sacrilegious."

"I am not sacrilegious because I happen to enjoy certain things and am puzzled over others. I think of the law-giver of Sinai, and the Commandment 'Thou shalt not kill,' announced to the children of Israel by Moses after he had killed his man.

"And I wonder, too, how Abraham would fare in the present day if he were here and passed his wife off as his sister to some millionaire so that he might become the possessor of wealth in the shape of presents. It would be automobiles, yachts and private cars now, instead of sheep, goats and cattle. But the sin of today was just and right, according to the Law in the good old days."

Then when I saw mama was actually gasping for breath at my audacity, added to the surprise that I had ever opened the Bible—we know so little of each other, Aileen—that I

kissed her and was off like a flash before she could utter another word.

Several things prevented me from finishing and starting this letter to you, my dear, and then something so very important loomed up on the horizon that had heretofore bounded my life that I was dazed.

There was something new in mama's manner the next day, and I felt, as when very little and very naughty, that it was as well to expect something. And I was not quite satisfied with myself for teasing her as I have been doing lately, but somehow she or other things have got on my nerves. I felt almost neurotic and wondered if I needed the rest cure, which many I know have indulged in.

Before I was driven to that or some other appalling thing I was informed by degrees that I had worried mama so much lately by my unorthodox opinions and unconventional behavior that she has decided to allow me to go away for awhile, thinking that travel will be not only to my liking, but will benefit me.

She realizes I have had a surfeit of society, and that travel will bring about a more reasonable frame of mind and eventually restore me to the proper place in the frivolous world where she moves and has her being.

Dear mama is right, according to her way of thinking. She is good and charitable and does what she thinks is just by her family and the world generally. But it is not the life I can endure. Surely there is something more satisfying in the world than the life I have so far known and lived. If the best part of our lives runs first and leaves the dregs at the last, I want to enjoy the clearest and purest while I may, and take the best God sends as I go along.

I shall try to take only about as many burdens as my constitution will bear, and live up to them. I think it is useless banking time on term deposits for the proverbial dull or rainy days to come. Enough to think of them when they arrive, for I know I can enjoy the bright ones that are born fresh and new with each somersault of the old world, if I forget that they are dull or gloomy ones that may come while I am enjoying the beauty of each bright one.

I fully agree with Seneca when he wisely remarks that "The soul is never in its right place until it be delivered from the cares of human affairs." Therefore, I am resolved that my soul shall take its proper place in the universe and be delivered from cares, human or otherwise, and be satisfied with the Now and Here of life, as I shall find it in other lands among other people. The folly of remembering, the wisdom of forgetting all that should pass out of my life shall be my aim.

I shall not strive or worry over what I do not have. I shall be satisfied with what I have, and envy no human being, and try to acquire knowledge rather than give up a life to the social world which gives but a poor return for the investment.

I shall try to be honest, frank, gentle and kind, avoiding gossiping tongues, but listening eagerly to the voices of nature which harden not the heart or sear the conscience; to bear the reverses that may come to me, as best I can, trusting that all will tend to purify and strengthen the better part in me, that my days may not be altogether unharmonious but pleasant and agreeable to me.

These Commandments I have given unto myself, dear Aileen, and now you shall write me of your life, even to its innermost thoughts and depths, as I shall write you, wherever I am, and tell unto you only of myself, knowing you will observe faithfully the biblical injunction, "Rehearse not unto another that which is told thee, and shalt thou fare none the worse." For the present, adios.

IV

"Death doesn't hurt in its time, but to miss—
Simply to miss one's life!"

Extracts from Frank Lindsay's Journal, Sent to Jack Gordon

Thank heaven we are leaving the old scenes and old sounds. Getting away from the noises of city life, the screeching, exasperating quarrels of the sparrows and the harsher voices of the human hawks, crying their wares in the streets,—the sounds that are in every one's ears; that beat unceasingly like the ocean farther out against the rock-girt Golden Gate, coming in fitful bursts like storm-gusts—sounds that are varied and assertive, that dare you to forget, to hope for silence from the turmoil and unrest of those who live, love and have their being amid the irritating, depressing and overpowering sounds that abide there always.

The "wander-lust," strange and mysterious that has been stirring in my blood for months—the fever of unrest and restlessness that has been upon me, already seems slipping from me. A drop of the old Aryan blood leavens my being, and the migratory instincts of birds, the quivering of invisible wings that have kept me restless and unsatisfied for so long, are quiet, now that I am speeding like the winds, on, and on toward Mexico.

I recall dun rivers of shifting sands, gleaming, tawny and yellow amid sparse grasses and sage and grease-wood. There were sapphire lakes and dry arroyos in whose depths the cacti and nasturtiums made great splashes of color. In moist water-ways there were brilliant wavy lines of purple, bordered by the yellow, misty, quivering mustard blossoms that, like death, have all seasons for their own in California.

There were wonderful days and strange visions at night. One, I remember, when propped upon my pillows I watched the effect of the weird moonlight upon that desolate region of

the Salton Sea. The light brooding over it was like the gray, pallid light of death, it seemed so cold and lonely. The engine's black breath left streaks above the white desert and hovered over the stunted shrubs and gaunt cacti that spread out whip-like branches. As we went further on there were other and varied species of cacti, with vicious thorns sternly and solemnly pointing in silence to the starlit skies.

We are getting into the dreamy belt, where things seem unreal and fanciful. There are mirages that are more beautiful and entrancing, more fascinating than realities we have passed. There are atolls in placid seas which seem to rise and fall about them as the rosy light of the sun pierces the blue mist and glints the pulsing waves lapping their shores.

Anon there were rivers and lakes bordered by forests, all so faithfully mirrored in their depths that it was hard indeed to believe the vision was not real.

Strange corformation of mountains are on every hand, as we speed on over the table-lands of Mexico. There are vast stretches of land that know no May or June, where the breath from moist mosses and delicate flowers and buds are unknown.

There are no soft twitterings from happy birds, no dewy mornings or moist twilights. The dear old earth is not so alluring here. There is no wet loam whose steaming warmth, fragrant with herbs, comes like incense into the nostrils. No gurgling brooks or babble of gossipy rivulets are here to tell the story of bird and insect life, and happy denizens of forest and plain of other countries.

But there is a fascination in the desolate regions that stretch on and on in such a wonderful vista of color, shading from gray to violet tints, in the solemn silence brooding over the lifeless deserts; even as a zopilote—or buzzard—now and then is seen far up in the sky, poising on still and seemingly lifeless wings, over the gray infinity of space.

But the precursor of civilization—our train—is speeding along the trail of the Toltecs and Aztecs. It is the great "road-runner," wingless, yet skimming along, girding the old Montezuma land with glittering tracks. And in the kaleidoscopic changes that have been strangly interesting, we come at last to the cultivated lands of Mexico. We see the

great haciendas, from whose high-walled enclosures the flocks come forth. There are immense herds of cattle going in one direction; flocks of sheep and goats, black, brown and white, guarded by their Indian shepherds in another. There are the peons tilling the soil where grow the corn and cotton. The land is cut in small squares with deep trenches, deeper than I have ever seen, except in Greece, showing the need of irrigation and the abundance of water for it.

Cotton is perennial and needs to be planted but once in three years, the soil being wonderfully fertile and needing

PLOWING IN MEXICO.

but little cultivation, their queer wooden plows, barely scratching the surface; and yet it produces two or three crops of certain things a year.

I see women in the huts grinding the softened corn on the metatas. Others standing, bare-limbed, in the ditches washing the clothes in water that often looks unfit for the purpose.

There are overburdened men and donkeys toiling with loads of wood and corn almost beyond endurance, the donkeys subsisting on any stray bit of straw or grass they may find.

The peon works, in this land of cheap silver, for thirteen cents per day, eating his tortillas and drinking pulque, if he

has a spare centavo. His meat, if he has any, is often the entrails of fowls and animals. But we are in the tropics, and though the wind is often piercingly cold, they live without meat, in the main, and wear as few clothes as possible.

And then, one dull gray morning we find ourselves in Zacatecas. I see square buildings, low and flat-roofed, huddled and barnacled against the hill-sides. There are domes and towers dominating them. Broken gray walls show here and there, and I think a bit of the Orient, a portion of Palestine has dropped down here in this cactus-lined country.

TEMPLE OF GUADALUPE, ZACATECAS.

There are terraces and steep declivities, reminding me of Bethlehem. There is the public fountain with the unveiled but reboso-draped women, doubled up over the high curbing, scooping up the scanty supply of water, filling the large red earthen jars, mere girls carrying such heavy loads that I do not wonder so many of the women are undersized. I think they telescope the vertebra of the spinal column at an early age and never get pulled out later in life.

We visited the chapel of the Guadalupe, some miles distant from Zacatecas, which is said to be one of the prettiest in Mexico, rich in gold, silver and onyx trimmings. The high altar was gorgeous, and the inlaid floors were a decided con-

trast to the worn and uneven floor of the old church, which was more interesting to me in its old age than the new chapel, which simply represented wealth, being the gift of some person.

Fred said, "Let us see the market; I fancy we will find something of interest there."

Old and quaint indeed we found it. A motley throng of people were wandering among the little heaped-up sections, representing inches or feet, according to the quantity the owners possessed. Everything one could think of was here. Small bunches of vegetables, usually half a dozen in each heap. There were beans and corn, tamales, tortillas, turkeys, chili, charcoal, chickens, and narancas (oranges), which we found very sweet and luscious. There were roots and edible grasses, crockery, quaint sandals and the omnipresent serapes and rebosos for the men and women.

Fred was more interested than he has been so far. His artistic temperament has been aroused and surely these half naked people, especially the children, would make very attractive pictures. I fancy he will find something to do in the line of sketches and paintings as soon as he finds the time and I hope he may very soon, for it will serve to divert his mind from the fickle fair one left behind. There are some very attractive faces here, Jack, that would make your old calloused heart give an extra thump.

I once thought the Italians could take the blue ribbon for ill-treatment of their horses, but I had not visited Mexico then. The donkeys bearing heavy burdens were prodded unmercifully and some I saw pulling the street cars were lashed into a gallop by merciless drivers, the whips cutting into their sides and legs at every jump. Tottering with fatigue and weakness it seemed the beasts were being subjected to the very acme of brutality and I turned my eyes away from the tortured creatures.

The natives here seem to be but little better off than the overburdened donkeys, they are so miserable, ragged and unkempt. Such poverty I have never seen, not even among Italy's beggars. Here the wretched lazzaroni, with senses steeped in pulque, dripping with vermin, infest the plazas

and jostle one in the streets. The dirt and grime make my civilized cuticle shrink with fear.

Seeking rest from the filth of the streets I entered an old church on our return to Zacatecas, for my stomach was inclined to turn somersaults at some of the scenes. A Madonna and some candles at the altar at the farther end of the church showed dimly and herein were the poor asking aid from above but keeping an eye on the stranger, also. On leaving, a wretched figure at the portal, so deformed and drawn that his face was on the bias, one eye being a couple of inches higher than the other, begged me so piteously for centavo that the milk of human kindness was something more than skimmed milk, for it instantly turned into whipped cream, and I counted out the coveted centavos until his poor, dull eyes brightened, and he said, "Gracia, Senor," over and over, while from his poor old eyes rolled tears of thankfulness; sobs and words of praise to Madre de Dios made me the worn, but willing traveler, feel glad that I had bestowed a little of the cheap coin of the country upon so needy an object. I went away more content, knowing he would have food for days to come, for there is a great deal of suffering in Zacatecas.

The silver mines that have yielded untold wealth and have been worked since the fifteenth century, are closed, and the people who have known no other employment for generations, whose ancestors burrowed into these surrounding hills from whose rock-ribbed sides untold millions have been taken, are now mostly without employment.

As I leave, my last glance rests upon a trail leading up to the Church Los Remedios, high on a hill above the city, where the faithful go, inch by inch, on their knees for penance and absolution. I thought to walk the rough streets; to live where every drop of water used must be carried from the fountain to the houses, some such weary distances away, would be penance enough for most things one could be guilty of in Zacatecas.

V

"The soul of music, I have heard men say,
Is to have grieved."

A Child's Grief

ALICE HEATON'S STORY

A little child lay on a small mound where grew no grass or flowers, sobbing her little heart out because there was only the bare, yellow soil, so unlike the graves near by which were well kept and beautiful, in the closely trimmed sward with growing plants and cut flowers in abundance.

"O mama, mama," she cried, "why is the earth so bare? You loved flowers so much. Why does not God let them grow over your dear, sweet face? Never mind, you shall have them, I will put them over you and hide the ugly earth." And away she sped.

There was a florist near by. She remembered seeing flowers in great bunches at the door as she went to the cemetery. Snatching several bunches of them she was away like a flash, and ran with all her strength toward the cemetery, so intent on her errand of love that she did not observe that she was pursued by a man.

A woman clad in mourning saw the child running with her pursuer after her and followed. As the child fell on the grave with her arm full of flowers, she raised her hand beckoning to the man who pursued. He paused, breathless, in his efforts to overtake the child.

"What is the trouble?" the woman asked in a low voice.

"She stole the flowers from our place," he replied.

"Wait a moment," she said, as he started forward, for the child, recovering her breath, was wiping the tears from her eyes, and then began to dig in the earth with her little fingers planting the flowers in the bare soil.

"Mama, dear," they heard her say, while the tears were again streaming down her cheeks. "You shall have the dear

little flowers growing above you. I will find them somewhere, even if I get them as I have today, and I will find some grass, too. You know how we used to gather the flowers and how we loved them. O mama, are you lonely down there? I am here talking to you and telling you how lonely I am, too. And I am so afraid at night. I have no one to tuck me in bed and to kiss me. Nobody at all, dear mama, to cuddle me up and sing to me as you once did."

Tears fell from the woman's eyes as she turned and mastering her emotions asked, in a choked voice.

"How much are the flowers worth?"

The man raised his chin, as if swallowing something, then said, "Never mind, let her have them. But, perhaps, you had better speak to her and make her understand that it is wrong to steal." And he went away.

Waiting until the little girl had planted her flowers the woman went up to her and asked:

"What are you doing here alone, my child?"

"I'm not your child; I'm nobody's child. My mama is down there. I saw them put her in and throw the great clods on her coffin. Then they took me away though I cried and begged them to let me stay. I didn't want to leave her in the dark. You know she never left me in the night alone. She always sat by me and talked and sang to me until I went to sleep. I ran away this morning and came here. I thought there would be some geramiums and bervenas growing here."

The woman smiled at the pronounciation, but waited in silence as the child continued.

"I saw the other graves were all covered with grass and flowers when they took me away."

"Well, dear, you must wait and maybe some verbenas and geraniums will grow. Perhaps God will see to it. But you must never take any more flowers as you have done today. Do you not know that it was wrong that you stole them?"

"No, I did not know. I thought flowers were for everybody. We always had them until mama was sick, and we came to town. I did not know it was wrong, and if it is I will get them anyway. If God don't treat her like he has the others, I will do it myself." And she straightened herself up with a determined air.

"You must wait. It will take time. All these graves once looked like your mother's. They were bare at first. Do you not know it?"

"No. I was never in a place like this until they brought my mama here. I hate the cold earth. She loved the little flowers so much. Oh, I can't bear it. I want my mama, and I want to die, too. I could jump into the river, you know, and die quickly. I saw a little bird fall into the water once. I would just keep my head under the water. It wouldn't take long, would it?" she asked, earnestly.

"Not very long," replied the woman, "but who would be left to look after your mother's grave if you were not here?"

"I hadn't thought of that. I only know how my throat hurts when I think of her and want her arms around me. I want to go to her, whether it is Heaven or Hell I've heard the preacher talk about. It would be all I want, just to be with mama. I don't care where it is, if I can only be with her."

"You will, dear, some time. God knows best, but you must try to be patient."

"How do I know what God thinks or does? He hasn't been very kind. Look at this grave with nothin' at all but dirt, only what I have put on it, and that you tell me is wrong. I hate God and the angels and don't believe they care."

And the poor child put her hands to her throat and sank down beside the grave.

"Has no one told you that your mother has gone to a beautiful land where there are always flowers and music; so many flowers that it must seem pitiful to the dear angels up there," and she pointed to heaven, "when they see us, especially you, as you were a few minutes ago putting the poor perishable flowers in the ground that will soon wither and fade away."

"Do you think they will give her flowers?" she asked anxiously.

"Surely, and she will have far more beautiful ones than you have ever seen. She will have more than enough for you and herself when you go to her. But you must not hate God and the angels. You must love them and try to do right and

be kind and loving to all. And now I must go. Tell me your name."

"Alice Heaton," replied the child.

"And who takes care of you?"

"Selma, my nurse, and I must hurry back for she will be angry. But I don't care. I'm coming again, and if there are flowers here I shall know God has heard me ask Him to be fair; to treat mama like the others. I shall love Him and try to be good and remember what you told me."

"Go home, now, pray to God and see if your prayers are not answered. Keep saying 'God is good. He knows all will be well.' Promise me you will do so."

"I will. I feel better now. You are kind like my own mama. Good-bye," and she ran away quickly.

After she was gone the woman went to the florist near the cemetery and directed him to plant geraniums and verbenas on the grave. "Do so at once, cover it all over, keep them growing throughout the whole year, and send the bill to me." Giving her address she left hoping that when the child saw the grave again she would believe that 'God had been fair' and her little jealous heart satisfied. * * * * *

"Is there never a chink in the world above
Where they listen for words from below?"

Every morning the sun and shade fought disputing inch by inch for possession. When the sun had conquered the cold, black shadows and drove them from the angle of the old wall I would go and nestle in the warm sunny nook and watch the padres at work in their garden. It looked peaceful and beautiful to me within that little gray, walled-in Eden, filled with vines and palms.

I used to look with longing eyes. There were no forbidden fruits for them and I rebelled at the idea that they could eat the great clusters of grapes while I was barred from them. I had an abundance of fruit and food, but none was ever half so tempting to me as those hanging inside the fence through which I would gaze with envy.

The garden, small and meagre enough, was of more interest to me than the freedom of the world without. It was

simply the idea that I could not get in the garden that made my childish heart rebel.

But the walls of the old Mission, its arches and cold stone floors, were of unfailing interest to me until I grew old enough to learn of what small compass were the lives of the padres.

I often thought it would be heavenly to wear a long, brown apron tied with a rope. Then I could play in the dust and

MISSION SANTA BARBARA.

roll like the sparrows if I liked and not be punished for getting my clothes soiled and hear the "Don't be so naughty, Alice. Try to keep your clothes clean like Ruth." "Ruth," I grew to hate the name and the girl. She was never very fond of playing in the sand, the acme of delight to me, to build little mounds and fashion houses of sticks and build walls like the dear old Mission I loved so well.

I remember the last time we played together and that she refused to go with me in quest of water-cresses. She taunted me with being untidy and said:

"Go, keep yourself unclean and spotted from the world."

I was hurt and hid away behind the hedge but I heard her mother reproving her, telling her she was unkind and something I did not understand about not saying it right; that it was different in the Bible. I resolved I would find out for myself sometime and kept repeating the words over and over until they were indelibly fixed in my mind.

I ran home shortly afterwards. I remember the house was in confusion; that I was not allowed to see my mama and there was terror in my heart. Everybody seemed distressed. Nurse tried to divert my mind. It seemed like a horrible dream and it was still more horrible when they told me my mama was dead; that she had gone to heaven and left me with only my nurse.

I cried and wanted my own mama, and it seemed as though I should die when they took her away and put her in the grave. I hated heaven and God, and the angels, where they told me she had gone. I needed her for I was a little child and had no one whom I loved or who loved me as she did.

I dimly recall running away and going to her grave; of taking some flowers, and a kind lady who spoke to me who comforted me in some way. Then I remember we went away the next day. I was not permitted to go to her grave again. I was put in a school where there were a lot of other girls where after a time my grief grew less and finally the memory of the life near the old Mission and my loss became indistinct and almost forgotten.

Being left alone among strangers I grew up wilful and careless, but given to solitude, and having no confidential companions grew into the habit of writing my thoughts down which I kept concealed from all eyes save my own.

It did not take me very long to find out that I was envied by the girls in the school for my mirror showed a face that was different from theirs and at times some of them would praise my hair, my eyes, and complexion, telling me how beautiful I was.

This made me happy and as I grew up into a tall, slender maiden, somehow when anyone spoke of my beauty I would always think of Ruth and I wished for only one thing on

earth, and that was to find Ruth when I should be out of school, and hoped that I would be more beautiful than she.

Strange that in forgetting so much that happened in my young life my memory clung to that last time I saw her and her words which seemed an insult to me. Possibly the loss of my mother helped to fix them in my mind—"Unclean and spotted from the world"—I knew now the real quotation and I hated her in my heart for the injustice. I knew I was clean bodily; that I was fair to look upon, and the thought of sin or wrong, except my dislike for her, had not entered into my mind.

Strange how trifles will change our likes and dislikes, how very little it takes to make an enemy or a friend in this world.

And then, one day I found my school days at the convent were ended. I was told that I was to be taken to the home of my adopted parents and I was taken away by a middle-aged woman who came after me. She seemed surprised when she saw me and heard my name, Alice Heaton.

"I did not expect to find such a grown-up young lady." I heard her say to the Mother Superior.

"She is not very large or strong, I think, and she should be allowed to live out doors for a while, at least," replied the Mother. "But she has been a good student and is far better educated than most girls of her age. She has never cared for the society of other students, seemingly preferring the teachers or myself, and I am sure her adopted parents will be pleased."

Though spoken in an undertone I heard every word and was proud to be praised. I had never been told I had been a good student or praised in any way that I remembered. I was anxious about my new home and dreaded leaving the convent, the only home I knew. I asked a question or two after we started on our journey, but Miss Hill was not communicative. I only learned that my adopted parents were old; that they had known my mother. But beyond that she would or could not tell me.

After a day's journey I found myself in the house of my adopted parents, both old and stern, but treating me with studied courtesy, never giving me a loving word or a kiss of welcome. I was shown my rooms and was allowed all

freedom as to how I should employ my time, but I was chilled when in their presence.

As the days went by I pondered often on their conduct and wondered why they adopted me, why they wanted me with them when I was sure in my heart they were ill at ease when I was with them. One day I heard the two old people talking about sending me away to Europe with Miss Hill who had brought me to them.

"I simply cannot endure it after all these years. It is as though Alice had come back. She is the image of her mother when we two went away and left her."

There was a sound as though Mrs. Browning was weeping. I was stricken with terror lest I should be found out and accused of eaves-dropping but I was hidden by the curtains and had been reading, and in reality was so engrossed in my book that I had not known when they came in. So I dared not stir.

"Yes," said Mr. Browning, "I am sorry we have brought her here, but you know it was her mother's last request and something had to be done. She had finished there and they could not very well keep her at the convent. We could not allow her to teach, you know," and he sighed. "Perhaps we were too stern with her mother. We might have found some better way."

"Never. I could not have lived and let the truth be known. She did not care for us and I ceased to love her as I once did for she broke my heart, and cared more for another than for me. No, every day the girl is here it seems to grow worse. I thought the old wound was healed in a measure, but it is not so. We are too old to travel and it may do her some good, and will keep her mind occupied until she is older. She brings only the old unhappiness, the deceit and treachery of her mother into this house where we must stay, and must remain, for I could not endure to have her with us in the old home where her mother was born. We must guard her closely until she is a little older and pray God we can find some good man who will marry her before she knows the ways of the world. We will keep her alone as much as possible for the present. O God, how the old pain comes back!" and she pressed her hand to her heart.

"Don't think more of it than you can help. Our way has been long and hard, but we must endure as best we can. May God in heaven eternally condemn to perdition the cause of all our misery and grief—him and his children's children—and if there is a just God, may he in the midst of his torments see the result of his work here! Come," he said, arising, "no more of this. I will not permit it. You must go to your room and rest."

I was filled with amazement. What did they mean? They knew my mother and said I looked like her. But why should it distress them? And why were they so unhappy when I was with them? Why did they have me come? All the perplexing "whys" that came to me—and they wanted to send me away? They did not love me—to travel a while, and marry some good man.

Over and over I found myself repeating the words. I was pleased with the idea—marry and get away from them. I did not love them, and now that I knew that I was not welcome, but only tolerated, I was determined to get away as soon as I could.

I was also determined to question Mrs. Browning, no matter what the result would be. I wanted to know something about my mother and my father, too. I have never heard him mentioned. I was too young to know or miss a father when my mother died, and later, at school, when I grew old enough to ponder over it, I had no one in whom I could confide. I only knew that I was adopted by some people who would care for me when I left school; that they were traveling in Europe, having lost their only child, and adopted me when my mother died.

I seemed to dimly recall a stern looking man whom I had never seen, who was present when my mama was buried. But that recollection had faded out of my mind until I saw Mr. Browning. He seemed somehow associated with my grief and terror at that time.

I was put into school by my nurse and told to be good and ask no questions; that "my mama would not like it." That was enough for me. If mama wanted me to be good I would try to please her, for I thought she knew, and the good sisters encouraged me in the belief.

But now that I am a woman almost, it is different and though in the house with my adopted parents where every comfort and luxury except the luxury of love was mine, I felt I must ask questions. I was anxious to know if they loved my mother. Why it grieved them so to have me with them. Why did they love her once, and then cease to care for her?

Oh, the misery of it all! I had never been treated like other girls I knew it too well. But I felt I would brave their displeasure by asking. So awaiting my opportunity, I asked.

"Why did you adopt me?"

Mrs. Browning looked startled, and after a moment said, "Why do you ask that question?"

"Because I am old enough to know something about myself. I have always been kept in ignorance—have never known if there was any living person who cared for me; and have never known to whom I was indebted for my food, clothing and tuition. You know something about my parents. I know my mother is dead but tell me, is my father living?"

I looked her squarely in the face. She evidently knew I was determined not to be put off any longer. Her face became death-like in its pallor. Somehow she reminded me of the look I saw on my mother's face when they put her in the coffin—a look that had haunted me all my life.

"Why do you ask about your father? Did your mother ever mention him?"

"I was so young I do not remember. I only thought of her. I never heard or knew anything about my father."

"Then continue to think of her and ask no questions. When you are of age or we are dead, there is something you will learn, but," and her voice grew stern and her eyes looked so fierce that I trembled, "do not for one instant forget that you are not to ask any questions about your mother or father."

She hissed the last word as though she could not put enough scorn and contempt in her tone. I was indignant.

"Why may I not ask? She was my mother and you knew her. Why has my life been spoiled? I have never been treated like other girls at school. Each one but me had let-

ters, gifts and loving remembrances. I was alone, an object of sympathy, and as I now realize of suspicion. A dead mother was all I had to make me feel I ever belonged to any one. You never sent me one word of love or of kindness. Yet I was adopted by you and your husband. How do I know that I really belong here, and why am I here if you hate the name of my mother? And now you tell me I am not to know if I have a father living or dead."

I flung the words at her, my face so transfigured by hate that, glancing in a mirror, I scarcely knew myself.

"Oh, you are a wicked, wicked woman, and I hate you for you are cruel. Tell me one thing, this instant," I stormed. "Have I any right to live here at all? Have I any money or do you and your husband" (I could not call him father as I had been requested to do so) "give me all I have? If so I won't live another day under your roof. I can live somewhere else or die. It would be easier than this life now that I know!" I paused choking with tears I could not control.

"Know what?" she asked faintly.

"Know that you hate me as you did my mother."

"Hate your mother! O God," she moaned, and sinking in her chair, her head fell back and I screamed, thinking she was dead. The maid hearing my scream of fright rushed in and summoning help they worked a long time before she showed any sign of life. I, trembling and contrite, was helpless, thinking I had killed her. Yet strange enough when she had recovered sufficiently to be taken to her room I felt no remorse, but in some way felt she deserved to die.

I went out for a walk. I wanted to think and plan out what I should do. One idea only was uppermost in my mind that was to get away from the two inhuman beings, who, hating my mother, must also hate me. I would be true to her. I would not eat at the table or sit and hear Mr. Browning return thanks when he had only hate in his heart for my beautiful dead mother.

Oh, the bitterness and desolation that filled my heart. I threw myself down on the green grass and wept as I had not wept since I lost my mother, sobbing my heart out. I did not hear footsteps and knew not that anyone was near until a voice said:

"What is the matter, my poor child?"

"I am not a child, and what are my troubles to you?" I demanded, flinging back my tangled hair and darting an angry look through my tears which would not be stayed.

"I beg your pardon. I was going up to the house," pointing to the Browning home, "and I thought you had fallen and were hurt."

Dashing the tears from my eyes I looked up again seeing more clearly and my heart seemed to stop beating for a minute, choking me and sending the blood to my face until it burnt my cheeks and neck. I had never looked into eyes like his before. Had never seen a man so handsome, tall and strong, with such an infinite pity showing in his eyes for me. Involuntarily I extended my hand.

"I am sorry I was rude to you, but I am hurt—sorely hurt," and again I could not restrain my tears. His warm clasp thrilled me with a strange, new sensation, one hitherto unknown to me. I wanted at that moment nothing so much in all the world as to fall in his arms and tell him of my troubles, my cheerless life, and my longing for love—something denied me, and unknown since my mother had left me a small child to the coldness of strangers and a strange life.

"Sit down a moment," he said, and still holding my hand he continued: "Some time when we know each other, when I know your name and we become good friends, you can tell me."

Then he smiled and his eyes looked as if he was laughing at me. This caused me to flush with anger and shame once more. I longed for pity but resented the idea of being laughed at.

"We shall never know each other or meet again," I said, with all the dignity I could assume. "My adopted father does not entertain at all, especially strangers."

"And where does your wise and good adopted father live?"

"He is not good, and I hate them both. They live up there"—pointing to the house which showed through the trees.

"Surely you do not mean that Charles Browning is your adopted father? I did not know he had an adopted child."

"Neither did I until I was brought here from the convent recently. I had heard that somewhere in the world there were people who had adopted me, but they never came to see me, never wrote, and now—" again I paused, trembling with my pent-up grief.

"Had you not better wait until some other time before you say anything more? I see how you are suffering." And again he held my hand in his strong clasp.

"No," I sobbed, "I will tell you now. Perhaps you can help me, for I am going away from here. I hate the place and those two old people. They are cruel."

"Poor child. How could they be cruel to you? Surely they could not be other than kind to a helpless young creature like you."

I loved him for the look and the way he said "like you" from that moment.

"I will tell you, now," I said, "my mother died when I was only a little child about six years old. I knew nothing but love until she died. She was good and beautiful. I remember well."

"I'm sure of it," he replied, with a strange look in his eyes.

I was surprised with the remark, but went on. "After she was buried they would not let me see her grave, but I ran away once and stole some flowers to put on her grave."

"You stole them?" he asked.

"Yes, but I did not know that it was stealing, or wrong until a lady came to the grave and told me. It was so bare and desolate I wanted flowers for it." I paused, even then I could not think of that poor little mound without a pang for myself, and my desolation.

"Then nurse took me away from there to a convent where I have been ever since until a month or two ago when they brought me here. I have tried to ask something about my dear, dead mother, and tried again today to find out from Mrs. Browning something about my parents and asked her why I had not the right to know something about my father and mother. I have never heard him mentioned, you know. She was very stern and angry and told me I was never to mention their names either to her or her husband. Then I told her I knew she hated my mother and that I would not live with

hem any longer. At that she fainted and when they brought ıer to, and took her to her room, I came out here to think ınd plan what I should do. I was so lonely and—" Here had to stop—I could go no further.

"Don't say another word, dear child. You must control yourself. I have come to see your adopted father on busiıess; you have been brave in trying to smother your grief in elling me your pitiful story. Will you promise me to stay ıere a while, no matter if it is hard for you, if I give you my olemn promise to be your friend, to help you all I can to nake your poor, lonely life seem more desirable to you? I vill see you again," he said.

"Will you—will you, truly?" I said, clinging to his hands. 'Oh, it will seem like my own dear mother was here again to ıave some one to care for me just a little, you know—only ı little—" I repeated, my heart leaping at the idea that ome one cared for me, a stranger to any evidence of sympathy except in the most casual way.

"As sure as we two live I shall see you, and soon. Now, heer up, and don't forget your promise," he said, as he went ıway hurriedly, never pausing or looking back until the path ent and hid him from me.

I sat in a sort of dazed stupor. I had never in all my life found anyone who seemed to care for me, or look with such kind and tender eyes into mine. There was tenderness in their depths and his words reassured me. Surely I would keep my promise. I would show him I could be something more than a child.

New sensations were stirring within me. I felt like anther being than the one who had run in heedless anguish and mpotent fury down the shaded path an hour ago. I seemed o have changed in that short time. Something new and strange had come into my heart. I no longer felt that I was a desolate, uncared for girl. He said he would be my friend, I kept saying over and over, and wandering along the path. I suddenly stopped with a start. I found I was singing. I had forgotten my grief.

VI

"Love in the heart can no more be exhausted than the sweet melodies in the throats of song-birds!"

Frank Lindsay to Jack Gordon

"I am thoroughly pleased with my journey so far, but Fred does not seem to enter into the spirit of travel as I wish he would, for he is moody and irritable at times. One day as we were passing some fascinating bits of scenery I said, "Fred isn't this simply delightful?"

"Yes, but how much more satisfactory if one's heart were in it. If one could look upon scenes with one he loved beside him. If the heartaches were gone and one could look into love-lit, appreciative eyes now and then, it would be all in the world I could ask for or desire."

"You can't forget with all this change even for a little while?" I asked him.

"I cannot. I shall never be able to forget. She is my ideal, my love, despite everything. I love her and shall be true to that love though she does not care."

"Don't be a fool and play the ostrich."

"What do you mean by playing the ostrich?"

"It is a habit of the ostrich for the female to select her mate. She chooses one according to her liking and gives him a coy peck on the beak, soothes him with a few strokes of her neck against his, and the marriage ceremony is complete. He follows her meekly and is her captive for life. He builds the nest as is right and proper, but when the eggs are laid, he sits on them all of the night and half the day. Now, it seems to me you are a good deal like the average ostrich. A woman made a pretense of loving you, kissed you and allowed you to return the compliment, and now you are willing to follow her all the rest of your days and be the dutiful nonentity you surely would be, if you were to mate with a woman who has proved heartless as you lead me to believe."

"I may have been an ostrich in some other sphere. I do not know, but I will take my hat off to the ostrich and bow to his constancy. Faithfulness is born in some of us, others acquire it, and I am so constituted that I am not fluctuating like the tide. I am what I am, and without looking backward more than is possible nor forward for that matter, I try to carry my burden as best I may, whether it be man-like or ostrich-like, as you please."

"I knew of one ostrich I should like you to imitate," I told Fred.

"Well, tell me of his particular characteristics."

"This up-to-date ostrich husband discharged his duties faithfully and though rather deficient in the matter of brain, was capable of seeing and reasoning as it proved. For, while he was dutifully keeping the embryo ostriches warm two-thirds of the time his gay consort was busily engaged in flirting with another fellow. He brooded over the fact as well as the eggs, all the while feeling his nails growing longer; and though his legs were rather cramped from lack of exercise he arose in all the dignity of outraged ostrich-hood one day and making a law unto himself kicked his gay wife to death."

Fred laughed at the sketch I had drawn as I hoped he would, for I try to divert his mind from his love affair as much as possible.

"I know, Frank, that you think me weak, and perhaps, I am. Heaven knows I would willingly forget, even 'kick' if I could. But somehow I cannot feel revengeful. I cannot even forget. If I could, it would be easier to bear. But only a little while ago a glint of sunshine over on those hills brought back a day not very long ago when the leaves of gold and green ran riot to the foothills, when the jay-bird scolded and the quail piped 'cuidado, cuidado,' while the wood-pecker shrilled 'yakit, yakit,' from the pine trees, that she told me she loved me, and would always love me. Frank, I tasted the divine elixir on that day which, once taken, lasts forever. For it means to me as it has to others who have drank of the sweetest of all draughts, aye, even the bitterest, too, as I know and feel of love—love that will not die but will abide in my heart, for it came to me a very tidal wave

from that great sea of love that pervades the whole world which by some wanton chance struck me and left me without strength, without the power or desire to recover or forget. I only know that I shall love her as long as life endures and beyond this life, if God wills."

"Fred, old man, I wish I could say something, a consoling word, but I cannot, only I advise you to try to enjoy the society of other girls. I know the girl you love, she has those wide-open, blue eyes, that go so well with her fair face and yellow hair. She is sweet and fresh to look upon, as June roses are fragrant and delicious. But there are narrow, selfish traits of character—it is often so—for her Madonna-like face does not show the cruel spirit. Eyes and lips speak of innocence, but often, as in her case, there is a fiendish, cat-like soul in her fair body. I know how she played with Norman Duane, even before you knew her, won his heart for mere sport and the vanity of it, then sent him adrift, his soul seared and his heart empty. Yet she goes on her smiling way, her beautiful eyes, bright and sparkling, as she weaves her spell around other men as she did you, my friend. So I ask you is it worth while?"

"I do not know. Yet surely it cannot have been in vain my love for her, for I have known, if only for a brief time, the ineffable bliss of a close embrace: have felt her heart throb against my own that was madly beating, suffocating me with the blood rushing wildly with the exquisite happiness of a first kiss upon her lips. A whole lifetime was centered in that blissful moment before she tore herself from my arms and left me. It was afterwards that I knew it was but a pretense of love on her part, and not maiden innocence and modesty that made her leave me so hurriedly. But even now, knowing her falseness and deceit I cannot help but love her and feel that life can never be the same again in all the years that may be mine."

"Do not be too sure. Don't say you can love only one girl until you have tried to love others. There are plenty with true hearts whose love would shame yours, perhaps. Try one with gray eyes. She will not fail you, but will be true as steel."

"How do you know?" said Fred, looking up in an interested way. "Is there someone you know?"

"Never mind. We are talking of your life now. Try your best to enjoy the diversion of travel, exercise your willpower. Forget the past, live in the present, make a pretense of love-making as she did, and in a short time you will find out that what you think is impossible is in reality possible and enjoyable. And now," I said to him, "let us forget all

MILK VENDER IN MEXICO.

that is past, all that is unpleasant, if possible, and try to enjoy this wonderful old country in the new world."

Thus I talked to Fred as we passed on southward from Zacatecas through a fertile and well cultivated country. Fields of corn and grain; groves and orchards greeted us until we found ourselves at the charming city of Aguas Calientes. Here there is an abundance of water, both hot and cold.

Down the new paseo or boulevard, along her streets and in the plaza I saw palms, bananas, orange and umbrella trees and artistic groupings of flowers and plants. There are other artistic groupings, also, consisting of natives—the Reception

Committee, I call them—who are always in evidence at every station with some sort of wares for sale.

Nearly every man who travels knows by the time he has passed the northern boundary line—twenty-three and a half degrees from the equator—and entered into the torrid zone, that Aguas Calientes is the place for Mexican drawn-work and the majority of women know the place only by the quality and quantity of material purchased there. Male and female, young and old are lined up displaying all sorts and kinds of work. "Pesos," "centavos," ring in one's ears from the crowded station, until one wearies of feather-work, hair-work, cotton and linen drawn-work.

Escaping from the crowd we refused the offer of a guide to see any or all of the twelve churches; but gladly chose one of the bathing establishments which are famous for their hot baths and continued on our journey refreshed in body and in spirit.

At Silva we left the main line going east to Marfil by rail, thence some miles by street cars to Guanajuato—where are located the richest silver mines in the world,—up the ravine from Marfil, which I found to be quite a Moorish looking village, over a road which took eighty-five years to build, but which is so substantial and good that, like the low, stone houses, it looks as if it were built to stay. The people are the cliff-dwellers of today, for the hills are so steep that niches are cut in the hill-side for the houses. There are terraces and charming nooks at the upper end of Guanajuato where the park La Presa is located, which is the chief resort of the masses.

Near here are the terraces of artificial lakes which are supplied from springs in the mountains, and water being scarce, as in so many places in the Republic it is stored by a series of dams which are remarkable in their system.

Over these stone dams and walls were all sorts of clinging vines running riot. Here the gorgeous Bougainvilleas flaunt their rich wine-red blossoms over gray, mossy, stony abutments and retaining walls, trail over verandas and dip into the clear water that in placid pools lie in front of many a charming home.

The private residences of the wealthiest people are built near these lakes and are mostly of stone taken from the quarries near the city. Green seems to be the predominating color although there is a variety of beautiful tints and colors.

There is a hint of the vine-terraces of the Rhine and a suspicion of Venice with the walled-in waterways over which are fancy bridges connecting with the streets.

From the quarries on the mountain sides we saw men bringing down on their backs blocks of stone. There were frail little burros, also tottering under heavy slabs, and then I ceased to wonder at the stone houses barnacled on the terraced hills with only goat-like trails leading thereto. Nowhere else could such houses be built, for in no other country I had visited do men and donkeys bear such marvelous burdens, carrying all the stone used in building houses and public buildings.

It seems to me there should be shrines put up all over Mexico as a tribute to the burro and the Indian, so much has been done by both. The traditional mule has inadvertently or otherwise founded churches, discovered mines, and located treasure. He and the visionary Indian have been the "sure thing" in establishing wealth and locating places of worship, yet neither has as yet had any recognition unless it be bearing ever heavier burdens.

If the mule that discovered the mines in Guanajuato had known the torture he was to inflict on his kind by the opening of the silver mines, he would not have tried by pantomime or otherwise to have emulated Balaam's beast. For in these mines, that since the conquest have yielded billions of gold and silver, or about three-eighths of the total yield of the globe during that period, the mule has played an important part in the reduction works and extracting the ore.

Everything connected with the city was of interest to us, and if the work be a little hard for those manana-loving people they are at least prosperous and not poverty stricken, as in Zacatecas.

We went through the prison filled with convicts, and saw them all busy at various trades. They are not kept in idleness here. This prison is historically known as the Alhondiga de Granaditas, which Hidalgo captured in his fight for inde-

pendence. A wreath is now hung where his head was exposed for so long. Honor came, as it often does, later, for the Republic is now Hidalgo's true monument.

One of the most interesting objects in the city is the Pantheon, which consists of about ten acres of ground, perched high upon the hill above the town. The earth of this cemetery was carried up from the lower levels on the backs of convicts.

I saw some open graves from which the bones of some poor mortals had been taken. They were strewn around

CATACOMBS OF GUANAJUATO, MEXICO.

on the ground while the grave was being prepared for another new-comer. The bodies are put in the ground for five years, and if no further payment is advanced the bones are taken up and piled in an underground charnel house.

I went down a spiral stairway and saw, heaped in indiscriminate confusion, the bones of some thirty thousand manana people for whom there are no tomorrows. It is worse than the church of Cologne, with none of the artistic effects of the Church of the Capucines in Rome, though at one end of this chamber of gruesome memories were some mummies in good preservation.

This, the fifth city in Mexico, is progressive, having a theatre four stories in height which is said to be the largest in North America built of stone; it shows such a variety of colors that the walls look as if they had been frescoed, and its appointments are perfect.

Our time was all too short in this city, where there is so much that is odd, instructive and interesting. The wonderful engineering, the ride on the street cars back to Marfil, the sharp curves and dusty roads thronged with people, driving the donkeys, children and pigs—everywhere a strange medley greeted us.

We saw men in the river bed with spoon-shaped affairs made from the leaves of the maguey plant, who were washing the black mud for silver that may have escaped from the reduction works.

There were men carrying water in jars which are almost as long as the carriers themselves, and huddled here and there were groups taking their afternoon T., which, taken literally, means the everlasting omnipresent tortilla.

Fashions do not change in this by-and-by land. They soften the corn and roll it on a flat stone with another one, grind it into paste, pat it in the hands into cakes, then bake it on a thin stone or metal plate, just as they did ages ago, and seem content with their inheritance.

VII

"Rome, whatever mood is hers,
To me, she is entrancing and adorable."

Edith Hammond's Letter to Aileen Livingston

Yes, dear, I am in sun-blest Italy, and am enjoying every day of my life here. Recollections are sweet of happy times gone by, but actual living in the present is worth a great deal more. This world is given us to make the best we possibly can of it and our lives, and we can make or mar our days, I fancy. I am simply living up to my ideas of making the best of each day and am thankful for health and am glad to be alive and to appreciate my good luck in being here.

I am not wasting hours moaning over the inevitable, nor do I feel like an old aunt of mine who used to sing "I am glad that I was born to die," and "Shed not a tear o'er your friend's early bier."

I used to ponder over the words and wondered how anyone could be glad to die, and asked my father once what "early beer" meant. I had never seen him drinking beer in the morning and said, "Why does auntie sing about shedding tears over it?"

He was drinking his usual glass of beer in the evening, and he looked surprised for a moment and then had such a fit of coughing and choking that I was frightened, but was not allowed to remain long, and as I was hustled off to bed I heard him laughing. It was a long time before I knew the difference in the spelling and meaning of the two words.

Well, at any rate my auntie died, and she begged and implored the doctor to save her life. She did not feel glad at all when her time came to die, and I fancy a few of us are when well and happy. So there is no use in being hypocritical, but make the best we can out of our lives, and when the time comes that will end the drama for us, try to meet it bravely. One cannot die but once you know. Therefore I am enjoying the present to the utmost of my capacity.

Today I lunched in a trattior, on the Aventine, and looked out on the ruins of the Palatine. The group of churches on the Cœlian Hill were sharply defined against a radiant sky. Avalanches of snow-white blossoms fell and clustered about the steep sides of the Palatine, making a vivid, joyous, blooming life above the old ruins.

How I wished for you as I sat in the palm-shaded window-seat and watched the wavering sunlight sifting through the branches, casting a cool, greenish light in the dim, old hall that reminded me of cloistered arcades where pale-faced nuns once walked in peace, trying to forget the ruins of high hopes amid the ruins so patent and tangible about them. For this is an old brick building confiscated from the church, and one thinks of the days when this was a refuge from the world's cruelty and scorn.

Within the shelter of these cloisters they lived, weighed down by the brutal force of matter that blasts so many lives striving for some unknown joy, some reward hereafter, by renouncing a greater part of all that makes life worth living.

I fancy it did not then, as now, take very long to disillusion them to the bare, colorless existence that stretched on and on in endless unvarying days. The idea is not at all pleasing to me. I know that I would and do even now, with the old heart-ache fierce within me, make the best that I can of my life.

I am idealist enough to love life that has color, form, music and beauty in it, and though oppressed with unsatisfied, longing with my whole soul for something that has gone out of my life, there is yet something within me that bids me not despair but look hopefully beyond the moment. And so I am not altogether dull and despondent.

I never want to lose my illusions. There are some beautiful ones left in me yet,—the illusion that there is love, truth and friendship in the world despite my experience. These exist, and that some of them are still mine is much indeed to me. Were I to be disillusioned then indeed it were time to die. I do not believe that it is necessary for life to be a tragedy and I am not exactly striving to make a comedy of mine. Neither one nor the other would be enjoyable to me.

I want for my friends only those who can see and speak of

the best that is in those they know. Who look upon the two evils that predominate in poor humanity—envy and jealousy—as if they were immoral and should be avoided as such. And who look upon gossip as a monster of so frightful a mien that an introduction should be avoided, and realize that an ignorance of the bane of social life—gossip—means peace and calmness of soul and conscience,—a knowledge and indulgence thereof means moral deterioration and degrades those who are caught in its wiles.

I want all the sunshine, all the brightness of life that is possible. I want the odor of flowers and all the fresh, beautiful things in nature. I want the best that I can find in the dear world, for methinks the true philosophy of life is to get as much sweetness out of it as possible.

Any joy that is not shared with another is of short duration. Therefore I must share some of the delights I am enjoying with you, knowing your appreciation of this dear old city and all that concerns me and my happiness in my travels.

There are hours, however, which are rich to me,—hours of solitude which I do not care to share with the unappreciative people who are with me, for in those hours I can create a heaven of my own, and live blissful moments in retrospection and anticipation or let the high tide of the present flood my soul with the sweet things that are, and then I want no one to share those joys with me. Evanescent? Yes, but sweet with the very essence of life's best, which is at least comforting and soul-satisfying.

Each day leaves its impressions and I store up something that may enrich my life and may be of some use to others,—things that you and I may enjoy when we meet in days to come. Yet in my busy moments my thoughts often fly your way. I think of you out there, beyond the plains, among the misty blue mountains, by the stream we love that ripples joyously over the golden sands.

I listen to a bird singing in the ilex trees, and farther away, so far it seems but an echo, I hear the answer that tells the mate the little mother bird is waiting for him. And still farther away across leagues of water and plains I hear, in imagination, your voice and long for your dear companion-

ship and my heart aches for you while my thoughts turn your way and toward some dear, remembered spot we two have seen together.

I think of the fragrant spring-time and breathe again the air laden with odors from azaleas, madroña and wild grape-vine. I see the great red splashes of the passion flower amid the green trailing vines rioting over hedges and trees. There is a world of sweetness and brightness about you. My heart longs for you, and a sob is only half-smothered as I look through a blurred vision at the sun, a great golden globe, as he dips into the green forests of the Borghese Gardens and is hidden from me, but is journeying toward you on the rim of the Western world.

But even as the last yellow beam dies away and faster than light my thoughts fly. And through the force of their intensity and my will-power I shall make you know tonight that I am thinking of you, that my love is with you,—as in the dear old days when we knew only the delight and innocent joys of childhood. And while I am happy in my life here in wandering about among soul-satisfying things, it is only natural that I should long for you now and then.

I shall write you again, but promise to say less of self and more of what I see; only now and then do I succumb to the pangs of nostalgia and allow my pen the freedom my tongue cannot have.

VIII

"In truth and treason, in good and guilt,
In wild ruins and altars low,
In battered walls and blood misspilt,
Glorious, gory Mexico."

From the Land of Mananas to the Land of Todays

One of our most interesting and instructive jaunts, friend Jack, was a detour westward from Irapuato toward San Blas, on the Pacific Ocean, to Guadalajara, conceded to be the most beautiful city in Mexico. This, the second city in the Republic, is charming with its plazas, Government buildings and the Cathedral whose great towers dominate the landscape. The city is more picturesque from a distance than it appears when one is in it. This jewel of Mexico has much that is pleasing and much that makes one shiver.

I remember some pleasant evenings we spent in the main plaza, which is surrounded by splendid buildings and filled with trees and flowers. The air was fragrant with odors of orange blossoms, roses and violets. I breathed the perfume and listened to the entrancing music that came from the band-stands, heard the soft musical language, watched the strange customs and exceedingly odd way the natives have,—the men walking one way around the park, the women in another direction. There is no mingling of the sexes in Mexico as in our country, but there are many sly glances as they pass and repass under the blaze of the electric lights.

I recall the grand Cathedral and the fine view from the towers of the city and surrounding country.

There were roof-gardens looking less poetical than the term sounds. For the flat roofs are used more often than otherwise for raising chickens as well as flowers. The hens are usually tied by one leg and they may talk and scold the little ones and tell them to go and scratch for a living, but it is no use; instinct is all right; but the juicy worm is not in evidence on the roofs in Mexico.

A painting, "The Assumption," by Murillo, for which thousands of dollars have been refused, is an attraction in the richly decorated interior of the Cathedral.

And in connection with this church, a friend told us later, that while there he saw some travelers from our own country dancing on the altar steps in a side chapel. What a howl would go up from these shameless, would-be funny people were foreigners to so desecrate our churches!

We visited one of the hospitals which is so large that it contains twenty-three patios or courts where grow fragrant flowers, and the refreshing sound comes to the patients from the fountains. Everything possible seems to be done for the sick and unfortunate in the way of open courts, fresh air, competent physicians and nurses. Some things struck me as rather incongruous, however. In passing through a corridor I saw a room piled high with ready-made coffins of all sizes, and in another room was a poor, unfortunate girl on a cot with a new-born baby beside her, and on a table near by were two grinning skulls!

Yet, withal, the inmates are far better off than are their poor fellow-beings who live across the river and in the suburb, San Juan de Dios. There I saw poverty and all its ghastliness as I have never seen it elsewhere.

In Italy, Egypt or the Orient, there seems to be something in temperament or climatic conditions to relieve the dreariness of poverty. Here the poor are huddled together in narrow, filthy streets, living in low square houses which have no windows.

The women rarely have shoes or sandals. A short skirt, some sort of waist, and the inevitable reboso draped about the head and shoulders constitute the usual dress. While more often than otherwise there is a baby slung at the back, securely bound in the folds of the reboso, leaving the mother's hands free for work or carrying other heavy burdens.

The dress or undress of the male element is far more picturesque, consisting as a rule of a pair of drawers of thin white cotton and a shirt—both usually looking as if they had been left over from a rummage sale—a serape and sombrero and a piece of leather for the sole of the feet with a strap or two across the upper part of the foot, passes for shoes or

sandals. The serape keeps the man warm during the day, and does for covering for both man and woman during the night.

It takes but little to start a couple in life when they agree to share the same serape. These peons are so poor that few of them save money enough for the marriage ceremonies, so they dispense with the usual formula that is necessary in higher circles, and purchase an alba or water-jar, a jug and piece or two of pottery, a pot for beans (frijoles), a flat dish

WOMAN GRINDING CORN.

of pottery or metal for the tortillas, a patate or square mat made of rushes which is their only bed, and which is placed on the earthen floor. These are about all that are needed for house-keeping purposes. The frijoles and chili con carne, if they have meat, are scooped up on the tortillas which answer for plates and spoons.

A good deal of time and energy is saved, aside from an economical view in thus eating plates and spoons with each meal. It is just as well, for the women spend most of their time preparing the corn, grinding and patting it into cakes, and baking it over the tiny charcoal fires. If corn is king

in Mexico the woman who shells, grinds and prepares it for the eating ought to be pretty close to the throne.

There is not much spare time for the woman in this land of mythical tomorrows. Besides cooking she must carry the water from the public fountains and wash her rags in any pool convenient for washing. Cities have public places for washing—lavenderias—which are creditable, but they are not for the poor. I have seen mere girls carrying heavy jars filled with water from the fountains which a man would take and throw upon the streets,—a primitive way of sprinkling, though rather easy for the man.

Other girls I saw who were a sort of traveling department store, carrying some two dozen or more sombreros piled high upon their heads, with as many baskets and odds and ends of things slung about their shoulders, walking the streets earning a few centavos. Yet I have heard it averred that these are the happiest people on earth. It may be so. One cannot judge from a flying visit, yet save in two or three instances I saw no children playing, as we are accustomed to see.

If outward demonstration counts, apathy and stoicism, coupled with endurance may mean happiness in the tropics, but I prefer the songs bubbling from the lips of the laughter-loving beggars of Italy, to the worshippers of the bull ring and cock-fighting Mexicans. Still one does not need to brood over these conditions.

It was far more pleasant to wander through other parts of the city where the wealthy live and see the beautiful gardens and handsome streets and houses with enticing glimpses of the patios or courts filled with gorgeous tropical flowers and vines and admire the fascinating women coquettishly peering out through the iron-barred windows.

And when over-wearied with the day's work it was charming to dine in the quaint hotel where palms and flowers lent their charm, and later to sit higher up in the open court where we smoked and gazed upward at a frescoing that has never been equaled. The dark blue skies and myriads of glittering stars were the only roof and seemed so low that one could almost touch them. Rest was sweet indeed, with heaven seemingly so near.

IX

"Show me the woman who can live without love, and I will show you one who lacks the element that sanctifies her sex and makes her the favored of God, in spite of her original sin."

Alice Heaton and Her Friend

It was several days before I saw my adopted mother again. She was ill, and I had my meals alone. Mr. Browning had his meals served in a room adjoining hers in order to be near her. I did not ask to see her as she had not sent for me and I was free to do as I wished. Hence there was but little time spent in-doors save when I was sleeping. I would take my luncheon and spend the entire day either in riding or with a book wandering among the hills.

Every day, after that first day when Mrs. Browning was taken ill, I met my one friend. I saw him somewhere and sometime during the day. At first it was by accident, he said,—as he was spending a few days in the neighborhood. Then he would ask me if I was to ride or walk the next day. If I was going to ride he would show me some beautiful trails. He always had an excuse and in my innocence I thought he was more than kind to take so much trouble and give his time to a young girl like myself.

He told me not to think for a moment that it was anything but selfishness on his part, as he was alone and enjoyed showing me the places that were old to him; but looking at them through my eyes he seemed to be finding something new all the time.

And then, as if to satisfy my scruples, he said he had spoken to Mr. Browning and he preferred that I should be accompanied by him rather than going about alone.

"It is not safe for you. There are all sorts of men camping and fishing in this region. So you must not go far away unless it is on horseback, and then it is best to keep on the broad road."

I said I had never taken any of the by-paths until he came.

"That is right, Alice, keep on the highways unless I am along to protect you."

Thinking I had Mr. Browning's permission and resenting any interference on behalf of Miss Hill, who was a deceitful, prying sort of person, I never mentioned where I went or that I saw anyone in my daily outing.

Soon I grew to be sorry when the evening came and I had to go home. I was always glad when the first peep of day came. I arose early, was impatient for breakfast and the hour to arrive when I might start out in the early morning to meet my new-found friend.

Mr. Bertram—as he had told me to call him, from the first meeting—had been kinder to me than anyone else had ever been. He had asked me and I told him all I knew about my life, which was not much. I only remembered my mother and the school, and again I would express my determination to go away, that I was only staying there because I had promised him.

"When you go away I will go too," I said. "I will not remain here where I am only tolerated. I have been unhappy all my life since I have been left alone. How lonely and wretched I never knew until I met you." And I looked up into his eyes with the ready tears in mine.

"Dear child, is it true? Has your poor little heart been starving for love and affection all your life?"

"I have never loved anyone since I lost my mother until—until—" I paused, ashamed of myself, I had nearly said, "until I knew you."

But a sudden shyness and confusion bewildered me, and I sprang up from the seat where we had been resting and running away began gathering some flowers. Looking back after a time I saw him bent over with his hands over his eyes. I thought I heard him groan, and ran back.

"Are you ill?" I asked, frightened by the drawn look in his face.

"For a moment. Run away and get me some of those flowers, please. I will be all right soon."

I was obedient and went away, staying a long time, while he lay prone on the ground, not moving until at last he sprang up and calling to me, said:

"Come, Alice, it is time to return. I am going back to the city tonight. I hated to tell you for you seemed happy in our jaunts about the country."

"Going away?" My flowers fell; my hands went to my heart which seemed to pain me. Something in my throat seemed to sting and choke me. I had not thought it possible that he would go away so suddenly. I must have turned pale, for he sprang to my side, put his arms about me and gently seated me on the little mound of moss where I had been resting so happily before.

"Don't look like that," he said, smoothing my hair. "I will come again and soon."

"Oh! I can't bear it. I won't be left alone. I have told you how wretched I was before I knew you. I don't know how to live,—how to get through the days without you. I cannot stay here with those two old people whom I do not love and who do not love,—scarcely tolerate me."

"Alice, you are mistaken. There is some mystery about your birth. I do not know what it is, but I am sure your adopted parents do not hate you as you seem to think they do. Your father—he is in law, you know—said in answer to a question of mine regarding you, that they were surprised to find you a young lady. They had thought of you only as a child until you came, and that you looked so like your mother they could scarcely endure your presence."

"But why? why?" I broke in, "if I look like her and if they loved her why do they not show me a little of the love they once must have felt for her?"

"There was something wrong. I do not know who your mother or father was, but they never forgave her or allowed her name spoken. She had a fortune of her own, inherited from a relative, and by the way, this has been kept for you. So much I know, and I think in time you might win them. How could they resist you if you cared to gain their love?"

"Do you think so?" I said eagerly. Then the thought of my dear dead one, hardened my heart.

"No, I do not want their love if they could not forgive her, no matter what her offense was, neither will I forgive them. They are hard and cruel. They knew where she was

buried,—out there on the sunny-sloping hill near the old Mission, at Santa Barbara. I did not know myself for a long time where we lived. I was so small when taken away from there, but I know now. One of the sisters told me that much, and some day soon I am going back there to find her grave. I remember even now there were some little wooden boards with her name. I could spell it then, when I put the flowers on her grave. Won't you help me to get away? I want to go. Oh, you do not know how it grieves me, the thought of that lonely grave."

"Perhaps your adopted parents have seen that it is not uncared for," he replied.

"Do you think you would dare find out from Mr. Browning if he has been kind or tender to her memory and placed a stone over her, telling the world that she was not forgotten. I think I could love him for that. Will you, dear Mr. Bertram?"

"Bertram," he repeated, as if surprised. "Ah, yes, and by the way, if you should have any conversation with your adopted parents or anyone in the household you need not mention that we have been meeting."

"But you said you had spoken to Mr. Browning."

"Certainly, but as you know he is peculiar, and as he will not go anywhere with you himself, he might not want you to know that he had given his consent for another man to accompany you. Besides, they do not know we have met every day, do they?"

"No one knows from me that I have met or known you. Why should I tell the servants? I do not gossip and I am not responsible to them or anyone for that matter. I do whatever I like and am pretty well satisfied if I can keep away from them all."

"I knew it! I was sure, young as you are, that you are not the girl to tell all you know."

"I have never told anything to anyone concerning myself. Why should I? And besides there has been so little—"

"There will be more and more coming into your life all the time now. Your eyes and your face will make history for you."

"I do not understand," I said, the blood rushing to my face as his eyes held mine with such a strange look that I could not take mine from his until he looked away.

"Never mind just now, you will know before long. How old are you, Alice?"

"I am only seventeen," I replied.

"So young and so innocent of the ways of the world," I heard him say, softly, as if thinking of something.

"Now, my little friend, I must see you safely home, or a part of the way, and then good-bye. Would you kiss me just once before I leave you?"

"But I have never in all my life kissed a man, or scarcely anyone since I was child," longing with my whole soul to throw my arms around his neck, as I remembered I had done when I kissed my mother. Yet not daring,—something held me back,—seemed pulling me away from him, while his eyes were drawing me to him all the while.

"Must I," and my voice sounded strange to me, "kiss you?"

He did not speak, but opened his arms and I flung myself on his breast with my arms around his neck, and found his warm trembling lips pressed to mine. Again and again he kissed my lips, my cheeks and my hair, while I clung to him. A strange ecstasy filled my whole being. My heart was beating so that I was almost breathless. He placed his hand on my breast.

"Poor little fluttering heart, do not be frightened," he said, and placed me down on the seat, sinking on his knees as he released me.

He smiled and smoothed my hair, stroking it tenderly

"And you have never kissed a man before?" he said.

"I have never known or been alone with a man until I met you," I answered.

"Then you must promise me here and now, by the memory of this first kiss that you will not allow any other man to kiss you. Will you, dear Alice?" And he crushed me to his breast with such force that I moaned with pain. He arose, and holding me from him, said:

"Do you promise? Will you swear that you will kiss no one but me?"

"Never, in all my life?" I asked.

"Not without my permission. The world would think it wrong, little girl. You must remember and do as I tell you."

"If it is wrong why did you ask me? I have no one to tell me what is right or wrong. I never heard the subject discussed at school."

"Do you mean to say that you girls never talked about such things?" he asked in astonishment.

"I was never confidential with any of the girls,—they did not seem to care particularly for me. I spent most of my time with my books and my music, and the Mother Superior was my only friend and she never talked about men."

"I can well believe it, my innocent little dove." And then he said, "I must go at once before it is too late,—come quickly," and hurrying me away we went on rapidly.

I was grieved and astonished. "Too late!" I wondered what he meant and yet could not summon courage to ask. Before we reached the broad road which led up to the house he turned.

"You haven't given me your promise," he said. "Promise me now that you will never allow any man to hold you in his arms or kiss you until I give you permission."

"Does that mean I am never to kiss you again? Have I done wrong?" I asked, while the tears sprang into my eyes.

"No, dear child, that does not apply to you and me."

"Then I promise you with my whole heart, and I shall keep it. I have never told a lie in all my life."

I laughed now, it seemed so absurd, the idea of me kissing a man, when I only knew Mr. Browning and the men servants.

"That is better," he said when I laughed. "Now try to be cheerful. I shall not be away long, only I may not be able to stay very long at a time. But I will surely come soon. Good-bye."

I looked up pleadingly into his face. "Why must you go? I think I shall die if left here all alone."

"One does not die so easily. If we both could it would be better. O child, child, you drive me mad. God forgive me for I know too well what I do."

Once more he took me in his arms, kissing me again and again. I felt a hot tear on my face, then he flung me from him and was out of sight in a moment, leaving me happier than I had ever been in my life.

I was glad to be alone for a time. My whole being thrilled with happiness. For the first time in my life I realized what a gift life was,—to live and to love! Oh, I knew the meaning,—the riddle of life now. For years I had hungered for affection and for sympathy. Now I knew that my whole heart and my very being was his. That with the first kiss, the woman was born and childhood had fled.

I not only loved him but it seemed as though I was in love with the whole world. I even felt pity, in a strange new feeling for the two old people up there in the lonely house, and I thought if they loved my mother once maybe they would turn their hearts toward me when they knew. I recalled Mrs. Browning's words, "If she can only marry some good man." She had wanted me to marry before I knew the "ways of the world."

I thought I was very learned in the ways of the world already. I had been allowed free access to the library and chose such books as I desired, without question or comment. I had devoured numberless books of romance which had opened a new world to me, and fired my imagination and had given me the idea that a man never kissed a girl unless he loved and expected to marry her. Oh, it would all be right very soon now, and then they would be kind to me. I might even learn to say "father" and "mother" in time.

As I thought of my new life it seemed as though my heart was almost bursting with the joy and pain of my love, and somehow everything looked different. The waters of the bay dimpled and sparkled in the warm glow of the afternoon sun.

"Ah, I know what the warm sunshine is to the earth now," I said, "it warms it like his kisses warmed and thrilled me with a new life. It is summer now in my heart, as it is summer on the land and the sea. Oh, I pray I shall not be wicked or hate anyone, now that I love and am loved."

I knew now what a desolate life I had lived. I had been like a poor creeping vine trying to grow up against a marble

wall, seeking to find some crevice, some opening whereby I might find warmth and the light, only to fall back hopeless and chilled, until now. Kind heaven! Where were thy angels that there was not one to whisper in my ear the folly of letting my heart spill out its first, best, and only love where it was worse than idle, and the divinity upon whom I lavished my heart's best treasure was, I had yet to learn in all its bitterness, only common clay.

Even in the first instant, when I knew I loved my darling, I felt that it would be the love of my life,—that all the love I had to give now or evermore was in his keeping, and I thought nothing on earth or in heaven could change or make me love him less.

It was oil and balm for my starved heart. It soothed the turbulence of my nature. I felt and knew it to be true. It calmed the sea of my existence,—it was as if an Aphrodite had broken the undreamed-of depths and sent the ripples widening with low sweet music that widened and spread on and on to infinity. I did not pause to think that there could ever be anything but the ineffable happiness of loving and being loved.

That he loved me I never doubted any more than the existence of God. Why, he had kissed me and held me in his arms! Was not that enough?

In that kiss all the bitterness seemed to have left me. I thought of Moses on the lonely mount of Nebo. I too, saw the fair domain of love spread out before me,—the beautiful land of love and happiness,—and even now I stood upon the border. I was really within the gates and claimed my inheritance.

I remembered the story of Moses and his wanderings; of the long years of toil and weary marches; the trouble and care, and that after all he was not permitted to enter the land of Canaan. And I was only seventeen years old. Yet I had thought my years were long and that they had been empty and desolate because no one had ever shown much interest or cared for me at all.

Now I had entered into the inheritance of love which I felt was my right, and I began to plan for my new life therein. I wondered if he had a home, or if we could live somewhere

up here on the sloping hills, for I felt I could never be happy in the city.

So ran my thoughts, weaving beautiful web and woof for the future. I did not know that I was not eating or that Miss Hill sat like a death's head at the feast, until glancing up I found her piercing eyes fixed upon me.

"You do not eat, and seem excited. Has anything unusual happened?"

"Yes," I answered, almost inclined, in my new found joy, to take her into my confidence and tell her how happy I was, but remembering my promise to say nothing, I added: "Yes, I had a dream today that made me very happy."

"And might I ask what you dreamed?"

"I dreamed for the first time in my life since my mother died some one kissed me and smoothed my hair as if they cared."

"And it was a dream, you say?" she said. I saw suspicion in her steel-gray eyes.

"Only a dream—what else could it be?" I answered. "Nothing of the sort could happen in this house or vicinity. A kiss would be frappéd here. It would be like putting your lips to a bit of frosty iron I heard an Eastern girl speak of once."

"You are inclined to be facetious," she said, sarcastically.

"Oh, no, I think not; but tell me, have you ever kissed any one in this house or witnessed an effort?"

"Kiss anybody!" She seemed horrified. "One would think you had been brought up on kisses, you talk so glibly of them."

"One's imagination cannot be curbed—there might be bliss."

"Yes," she retorted, "and microbes, too."

"I do not think I shall fear microbes if I ever have an opportunity to contract them; I am young, you know, and can afford to wait a while. Now, if I were past forty"— and I looked at the crow's feet around her eyes and felt there was not much chance of contagion for her—"one contracts diseases more easily when one is young."

I saw her sallow face redden a little. I was having my revenge and might talk about the danger and told her there

would not be the slightest danger of her contracting microbes by kissing.

"You have already contracted a disease that you will scarcely get rid of without severe methods," she said.

"What dreadful malady might it be?" I answered, teasingly.

"Impertinence," she said, as she arose and left the table. Her vanity was wounded, I knew. But she had never seemed to like me and resented my coming, I thought, so I had not tried to conciliate her.

Suddenly it flashed across my mind that I had not been nice and my new resolves, my love, that had made me feel kindly toward everyone opened my eyes to the fact that I was not respectful. I jumped from my chair, ran to her, grasped her hand and said:

"Forgive me, I was wrong and not respectful."

She opened her eyes in astonishment. It was the first evidence of emotion she had seen in me.

"I do not want to be impertinent or sarcastic, but no one in this household has by word or action shown me that I was welcome. You all seem to copy the manners of your employers. I seem to be here on sufferance by them and tolerated by the others, you, especially. Why are you not kinder? What have I done that I should be treated so? When I come in the house from outdoors it is like coming into a cellar. The atmosphere is cold. The human registers here do not generate warmth."

"Possibly we could not compete with the one that has aroused you to unusual action. You are changed since—since your dream of today," she sneered.

I was paralyzed for a brief moment. I saw it was to be war between us, and I threw back my head and laughed. Not for worlds would I permit her to think the shaft had struck home.

"Then, with your kind permission, I will go on with my dreams," and I knew my eyes flashed defiance.

"I could not expect anything else—what is bred in the bone—and you—well, I think it will not be very long before you are in a different mood. You may even yet be willing to curry favor from me; then my time will come."

"Never," I said, and in my soul I knew that whatever my fate I would die rather than appeal to her, cold and heartless as she appeared.

"Why should I expect love, sympathy or mercy, if such were ever needed from you? There is no milk of human kindness within your body. If punctured, your veins would ooze ice-water, I am sure."

Just then I saw Mrs. Browning standing in the doorway. She looked feeble and so much older than when I saw her last. I was certain she had heard every word of our conversation and I was not sorry, for I had borne covert sneers until I was on the verge of active rebellion against the entire household.

"You can go, Jane," she said to my ruffled enemy,—I knew she was not my friend.

"Sit down, Alice," she said, "I have recovered sufficiently to have a little conversation with you. I know you are not happy in this house and we have been planning to send you away with Jane for a year's travel."

"With Jane! I will not go with her," I said, with vehemence.

"Why not? I pray. She is faithful and trustworthy."

"Yes, faithful to you and detests me. I will not go with her. But tell me first what did she mean by saying—'bred in the bone'—why are you all keeping something from me? Do you think I am so stupid that I do not realize that there is some mystery? I am not a child any longer and you have no right to treat me as such."

"I have the right to do as I choose and can compel you to obey me for another year at least," she said, her eyes gleaming like coals, her brows knit together. "Jane has told me that you have spent but little time about the house since I have been ill, and it is also said," she spoke in a voice that trembled with emotion, "that your days have not been spent in solitude."

Oh, that prying old Jane, with her cat-like step and steely eyes. I knew then what she meant by "curry favor." Indeed, well, we would see.

"So you have not been too ill to set your spies at work," I said, in cool even tones. The blood of some old warring

ancestor of mine was aroused. I would not cringe or show fear though it be war to the death. I was no coward. I had done no wrong. Why, only today I had thought I could love her, and that she would be pleased when I told her I was going to fulfill her wishes—that I was to marry a "good man," her own words that had come to me with the realizing sense of love in that first kiss.

But now confession was out of the question. I would not give her the satisfaction of knowing what I knew, and yet through it all my heart was singing for joy; for I had some one now to tell my sorrows to, some one who would kiss and console me. Their unkindness could not hurt me longer. So my thoughts ran on until I heard her speaking again.

"I have done what I deemed my duty. I did not know what sort of a girl you were or what the convent had made of you. I hoped the influence there might counteract certain tendencies which I feared were inherent."

"And pray what 'certain tendencies' do you refer to?"

I was curious to know—to learn something of inherited characteristics. I had studied a little in that direction.

"Duplicity and following your own desires, regardless of consequences," she answered.

I felt that in a measure she was right, though I had not thought of concealment. She had been ill since I had been meeting Mr. Bertram, and I could not tell her had I so desired. Besides in all the weeks since my arrival I had come and gone unquestioned, and I knew Mr. Browning had given his consent. Then suddenly the thought came to me that Mr. Bertram had said, "Do not mention our meeting." His word weighed more with me than anything else in the world, so I answered:

"You evidently are not satisfied with the convent training and are going to experiment in another direction."

"You are quick to comprehend, therefore I want you to accept the situation and that without any useless opposition. You are to make your preparations at once. Perhaps you may understand why I am anxious that you should go as soon as possible, though I had not intended sending you away to travel for a while—but events have forced me to action. You will go to the city tomorrow with Jane and pur-

chase a wardrobe, suitable for traveling. It will be comparatively easy for you to find all you need. Jane will know all that is required if you do not."

"So you have settled it according to your wishes. Now, listen to me. First of all I want you to answer a question: Did my mother leave any money for me, and who has furnished the money needful for me all the years since she died? I demand that you answer me truthfully."

She waited as if in doubt, but finally said: "Yes, there is money of your own awaiting you when you need it."

"If I consent to go away with—with the disagreeable person you have selected," I said sweetly, "can it be arranged that I may have the use of my money for anything I may desire to purchase? I have a good many whims which you have not understood."

"We prefer that you should not use the money, even if it is yours, until you are eighteen; but, if you insist, it is easily managed and it will be so arranged, if you will be reasonable and not give me further cause for uneasiness."

"I want it all settled before I go to the city. I want to begin by selecting some little things with my own money."

"My husband is going to the city tomorrow—it will be arranged that you can draw so much money per month."

She named the sum which was far beyond my expectations. Why, I thought, I must be rich in my own right. I would not be obliged to accept any favors from them and in my heart I knew I would not. She could keep her secrets. The mystery of my birth and my adoption she would not reveal to me.

Well, I would be reticent also. I had formulated plans which she might learn sometime, but not from me. When once I was put in possession of what was rightfully mine, I could laugh at her. I would go and hide from her and her spying servants for a year. Then, when I was of age, I would defy her and would come and go as I pleased.

But all the while I was laughing in my heart, for I thought if I were married how surprised they would be, and I pictured myself coming back just once, sending my card in with Mrs. Bertram upon it, and then I would see her and ask if she thought I had learned the ways of the world, and if she did

not think my husband was quite capable of being my guardian, and that I had taken the law in my own hands and adopted a husband who was exactly to my liking.

My thoughts ran riot. I was almost crazed with the sudden change in my affairs and when she dismissed me I retired to my room. Early the next morning I was out of the house eager to be alone while planning for the future.

I went on and on past familiar places and still on up the beautiful ravine, climbing the sloping sides of Mt. Tamalpais, pausing now and then to wonder and admire. About me lay the deep silences of the hills, broken now and then by the wood-pecker's hammering away in glee on some old decayed pine tree, or the shrill quarrelings of the blue jays as they flashed by like streaks of the rich sky above me, luring me, and calling me to follow them to their haunts.

The solemn sweetness of the hills, the fragrance of the pines brought forth by the sun's warm rays on the feathery foliage was restful and delicious. I felt as if I were part of the forces which were about me. I could feel the quickening pulses of the forest, could, it seemed to me, hear the heart-throbs that sent the quick running sap up and up to the farthest tip of the tiniest twig. The warmth and fragrance touched my heart with its softening influences—the high and lofty peak above me, the wide landscape, the ocean glittering like an amethyst beneath a violet sky and over against the farther side of the bay lay the great city.

I found myself speculating upon its vast length stretching back even out to the ocean's borders. I had been there only once and had not cared for the cold winds and fogs that chilled me, but now I looked with greater interest. Somewhere in that wilderness of streets and houses was the man I loved. Ah, I thought, I shall not mind the foggy evenings or the cold winds when I am safe within the shelter of his arms. Glad, happy thoughts came to me—my life seemed expanding and broadening with the vision.

The narrow boundaries hitherto known melted away. I had never before known what freedom really meant. I felt today for the first time the foretaste of emancipation. In one sense I was to be mistress of myself—and my actions. I

was taking long breaths of freedom. The freedom of the hills was mine and life was to be henceforth unfettered.

I sensed the odors of the woods, heard the clear call of the birds, happy in their leafy coverts. I understood now as never before theirs were the joy notes in nature. They are, I thought, the vivified, crystallized notes of immortality. Each day is for them only so many hours of gladness and song. They do not answer for their actions one unto another. There is no bearing of one another's sorrows—no overburdened heart is touched to the quick by the sorrows of others.

Theirs seemed the right life and the only life to live, a life of song, of love, two by two building their nests, the earth furnishing their food and their home, and between times singing glad notes of thankfulness in the sheer joy of being alive.

Over and over, more clear and insistent, came the song of the orioles swinging high above my head, and the robin's joyous anthem to the fresh spring morning came to my ears as he stopped now and then to call, "sweet, sweet," to his mate hidden in her downy nest.

Added to these was the wordless eloquence of the wind among the pine trees which seemed to possess a subtle meaning in the faint sweet music that stole into my heart. It was so far away, so touchingly soft and tender in the weaving and unweaving of melodies. There were deep tones like God's great voice coming from the sea answering unto sea against the rock-ribbed Golden Gate. Then nearer me the gentle zephyrs sighed beneath the canopy overhead, clear, soft and lulling, like angels singing—while the quivering trees clapped their rounded leaves together in joyous glee.

It seemed to me I heard a far-away echo of myriads of angel hands applauding the grand symphony, Nature responding to Nature's God, harmonious, divinely tender and appealing; and lying prone on the warm pine needles I watched the great fleecy, foamy clouds rise higher and higher piling above my head, and I fancied I saw a chariot and a great white throne, then hosts of dim figures surrounding a form I eagerly imagined to be the King of kings; and among them I seemed to see a face—the face of my mother. With a sob of joy I held up my arms—heaven's gates seemed near for a

moment—then the vision faded. That day can never fade. The picture will always be bright in memory's halls, and sacred, too, for never more in life could there be another like it. I hated to see the shadows lengthen as I loitered on the way back, looking down aisles of forest trees, gathering the perishable flowers, listening to the innumerable sounds that seemed to be pulsing in sympathy with my happy heart.

I watched the undulating madroñas and laurel trees and heard whisperings soft and gentle like nuns in prayer coming to me from the great cloistered forest, that even if they brought no tangible message were full of the essence of peace and the spirit of love which was a balm and a blessing to me.

I looked upon the fair scenes. The Mount of Beatitudes was sublime and beautiful. I felt I had received a benediction today. The lovely little valleys, the wide stretch of waters extending to unknown regions, the islands dotting the bay showed through a luminous atmosphere fair, hazy, dreamy—symbolical of my life that was to be. I went down from that enchanted mountain with a strange peace in my heart, and so happy that I was glad I had no one with me to mar my dreams. I could tell it to the winds in soft, low snatches of song, the perfumed airs that blew out, and on over the depthless ocean holding its treasures of pearls and gold, guarding them as my heart did the warm gulf-stream of his love that had found and warmed the cold and uncared-for life that was so precious to me now. Then I was suddenly stricken with fear lest I might die before knowing the absolute bliss of being his, before I might give myself up to the vast unbounded love that I knew existed within me; that being bestowed upon one so good and so kind would create a paradise of our own and make earth so beautiful that the heart could ask for no greater happiness.

X

"A song whose echoes softly fell
Around my heart and wove its mystic spell;
A laugh, a cry, a heart that broke—
What matters life or love?
It all ends in smoke."

"Do you remember those lines, Fred?" I asked him one morning, "and do you not wish the writer were here? She might improvise some equally appropriate lines while we smoke, as she did the aforesaid lines. Caro mia; I think I could willingly forego all these languishing eyes for just one look into yours today," I said.

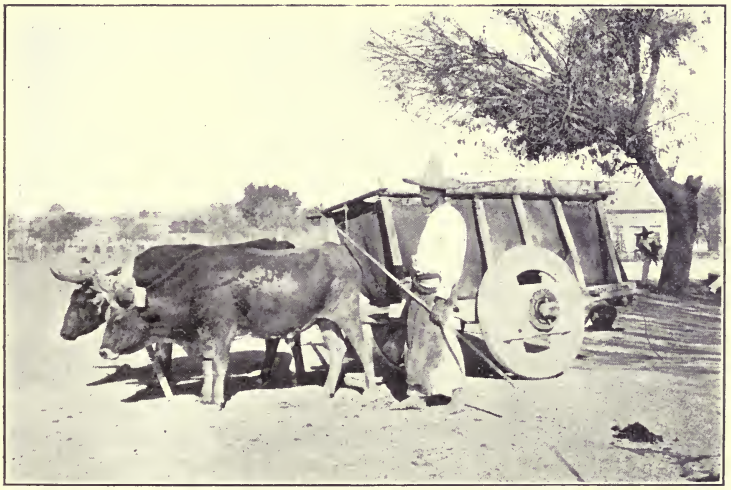
"It would be a change," replied Fred. "She is worth her weight in gold. She is not enervating. There is a sort of tonic in her presence, in her smile and the good strong clasp of her hand is inspiring. She flashes her vivid personality upon one's sluggish brain with an intensity that is exhilarating. You have mentioned the one woman who would be a joy forever in traveling. What made you think of her?"

"I do not know; the smoke got in my eyes, I think. I often wonder what that vivified bit of femininity knows about a 'heart that broke.' How do any of us know, unless one is a fool like myself and talks. Never mind," I said hastily changing the subject, for really I am getting quite light-hearted about Fred. His gloominess is perceptibly vanishing as we are busy with our sight-seeing and once or twice I have found him chaffing with the senoritas while buying their wares, and he is given, I observe, to returning the languishing glances bestowed upon us from the fair faces that peer at us from the iron-barred windows. Not for several pesos, however, would I allow him to know that I detect the slightest change.

I think this jaunt will prove as beneficial to his shattered heart and broken life as it will to my jaded and run-down nervous system. We are both in the mood to enjoy every hour and a fascination of the places visited has mastered us. It seems as if we are both fast forgetting the old life and en-

tering a new one with zest and renewed energy. I only wish I could go more into detail than the mere outlines of travel that must content you for the present, and so I will continue my description.

Guadalajara, contrary to the rule about first impressions, grew in attractiveness upon me, possibly, because of the many charming places in the vicinity. I remember San Pedro and the ride along the ancient calzada lined with magnificent old trees. This, the favorite suburb of Guadalajara,



OX-CART AND PEON.

has well-paved streets, handsome residences embowered in tropical foliage and surrounded by beautiful gardens. It seemed another world out there amid the beautiful out-of-town homes. "Summer residences" are not spoken of in a region where it is always summer.

I recall another day and a drive along the beautiful river out to Zapopan, where a delightful afternoon was spent studying the people, enjoying the quaint life and wandering through a marvelous church. We returned late in the afternoon over a road so old and worn that it seemed more like the worn-out bed of some water-forgotten stream.

We stopped now and then to gather fruits from strange trees and watched the peons carrying enormous burdens on their backs. Most of the products of the country are transported to the city by men and donkeys. Here, at least, it was necessary for the road was so rough that we had to leave the carriage quite often, and a two-wheeled cart would be out of the question.

As the sun went down a golden light shone over the beautiful valley of the Lerma. Some old aqueducts reminding me of the Roman Campagna were in the distance; other old ruins showed here and there, and shapeless forms draped in rebosos and serapes rode silently along the tortuous road. As we came near to the city the golden glow faded from the Gothic-Tuscan towers of the Basilica, the white spires of the churches and Oriental-looking houses gleamed in a soft light.

Faint musical sounds from bells came across the plateau, sounding the mystic hour of the Angelus. The rhythmic beat was in my ears. The breath of the soft tropic night, fragrant and sweet, was in my nostrils; and the last look at the great plaza with its lights and gay throngs of people drove all that was unpleasant from my mind.

And I remember—for some impressions are lasting—only the beautiful and charming Florence of Mexico as I saw it on that last evening. The scene was enchanting, and even the poor ragged bits of humanity seemed transformed into a happy and contented lot, each and all enjoying the dolce far niente of the hour.

Once again we were in the cars with our train speeding over one of the most attractive and fertile sections of Mexico, through a portion of the State of Jalisco along the Lerma—the Mississippi of the Republic. There were glimpses of Lake Chapala, which is larger than the Lake of Geneva, and higher than the top of Mount Washington.

The route lay through a splendid wheat country and the miles of fields of a large hacienda, where were thousands of men at work on the different farms—for the hacienda is the headquarters of the vast estate—and hundreds of oxen and other animals were at work or being pastured on the rich lands.

A whole village clusters around the residence of the proprietor, and there are electric lights and a railroad owned and operated by the owner of miles and miles of land which produces anything and everything the heart desires.

We skimmed over steel threads along the trail of the Toltecs and Aztecs through this old land of the Montezumas, finding much of interest in every mile.

Between the dark and the daylight we paused at Irapuato on the main line, famous for its strawberries. Ghost-like figures offered baskets heaped with the fruit and soft voices cried, "Fresas, fresas dos reales," and for twenty-five cents or less than ten in our money, one can buy a basketful. They ripen every month in the year and are abundant, for there is plenty of water for irrigation, though their up-to-date waterworks in the plaza consists of an old-time crotch-and-pole well-sweep.

But even that is better than the conditions in Marfil, where I saw nude men on a tread-mill drawing the water, bent double on the high wheels, no stopping or resting, working the livelong day, as do so many others in this land of free silver, for thirteen cents per diem.

We speeded on over the hills, those same hills over which the mysterious Toltecs came from the north in the year 648. The scenery is grand; there are mountains, valleys and plains with haciendas dotting the landscape amid well-tilled fields, which must possess wonderfully rich soil, judging from the primitive plows which barely stir up the earth.

Then we paused at Queretaro, one of the smallest divisions of the Republic, but one that is replete with history. I thought of poor Carlotta, who lost her reason; of Maximilian, who was shot; of the crosses on the hill, which are grim evidences of the futility of an attempted monarchy on the North American continent.

We passed under some stone arches of an aqueduct which brings the water into the city from the mountains. This luxury the city enjoys through the generosity of one man. A vision of the picturesque arches left a deep impression upon my mind as we left the town and the clamorous opal-venders.

Further on the train stopped, and we got out to look at a great piece of work which has no parallel in the history of

IXTACCIHUATL, *17,071* FEET.

civilization—the famous Nochistongo—the futile cut or canal which is some twelve miles in length, with an average depth of one hundred and eighty feet. Every foot of earth was carried out on the shoulders of men. Millions of dollars and

thousands of lives were lost, yet it failed in its purpose of draining the City of Mexico.

From the train we had a vision of broken mountains and hills, hamlets, lakes and towns, while reaching far up toward a turquoise sky of blue were peaks of far-away ranges. Yet in the clear atmosphere the white glistening snows on the peaks of Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl seemed almost within reach. Then, amid a jangle of emotions, Fred and I found ourselves in the city Cortez captured.

The history of the City of Mexico is substantially the history of the country; but I am not a historian as you know, Jack, simply a traveler intent on whatever is pleasing or of interest to me, and I only mention a few of the things that appeal to me.

The Hotel Iturbide, where we lodged, stands where Aztec kings once had their gardens for their wild beasts, and is where the first church was built by the Franciscans, of stone taken from the Aztec temple. It is an old palace transformed into a hotel. Its main patio is not attractive, being destitute of plants and flowers, but it is rich in carved stone, arches and columns.

Our names and the number of the rooms being written on the hotel register—which is a black-board—we were shown our rooms which opened on a smaller court. The gentleman of the bed chamber brought the lampere and cerrillo—lamp and matches—then agua caliente and with a "buenas noches, senors," we were left with the absolute necessities of life, in peace after our long journey, though he thought, if appearances were worth anything, that water was useless.

In going out the next morning I found myself shivering with cold, and try as I might the triumph of mind over matter did not occur. I reasoned that it was not cold; that I was down in the torrid zone, and, while asserting that I was warm, knew that my hands and feet were cold; that there were little rills of icy coldness chasing up and down my spinal column.

Then I remembered that I was one and a half miles nearer heaven than when at home, and wicked thoughts of a desirable place in regions lower down restored my good humor and a laugh changed the temperature.

From the roof of the hotel I saw the charming city about me. There were towers and domes, parks and plazas, long tree-lined avenues. Electric cars were everywhere on lines radiating in all directions from the Plaza Major, which is dominated and overshadowed by the great cathedral towering on one side and the President's Palace on the other. Here the bands play and the poorer classes throng the paths and rest on the seats. It is their own or rather is left principally to them.

The Alameda, farther down on the Paseo, leading out toward Chapultepec is for the better class. We sat in the same Alameda one Sunday under a canvas covering which is put up each Sabbath, and watched the fashionable parade which is much like the Sunday church parade in London.

Everyone evidently had on his or her best. Some of the dresses of the women were very much of the texture which our women wear in California in June. We enjoyed the rich costumes, bright faces, and low musical language.

Here we saw the rather fetching double-kiss always given on the cheek—there are some sanitary customs in Mexico—and the affectionate pat on the shoulder and pretty way of saluting each other. Society may be seen and appreciated at the Alameda at noon on Sundays and the other extreme at the Plaza Major late in the afternoon.

XI

"He is coming, he is coming;
In my throbing heart I feel it;
There is music in my blood and it whispers all day long,
That my love unknown comes toward me!
Ah, my heart he need not steal it,
For I cannot hide the secret that it murmurs in its song."

As Told in the Journal

My slumbers were very light that night, and the next morning, true to her promise, Mrs. Browning gave me papers and instructions regarding my money. She could not dream how glad I was to feel that I was independent and free from them all. I had planned to slip away from Jane and find my way to the station. I would go to Santa Barbara, to my mother's grave. Perhaps I might live again in the little cottage. I thought I would know it, and, sanctified by her presence, I would be happy and I could assume another name so my guardian could not trace me. I was not learned in the ways of the world as yet. It was all quite easy now as I planned it.

First of all, when we arrived in the city I insisted that Jane should take me to the bank where I drew so large an amount of money that she stared in astonishment. All being satisfactory, I told her that as Mrs. Browning had said we were to start soon on our travels, I did not want to come again before leaving and that I wanted money to get what I desired.

All this was true. There was no falsehood. I needed it and though she did not know it, I was not going to have the horror of her company. Later came the farce of purchasing what I knew to be needless articles, and all the while I was wondering how I could lose myself.

Finally fate was kind to me,—Jane went up in an elevator on some errand, telling me to remain in the aisle of the store until she returned. I was out like a flash, hurrying away I knew not whither. I sprang on a car and almost before I

realized where I was, found the car was at the Ferry. I got off, as did the other occupants of the car, and stood undecided for a moment, then a hand was placed on my shoulder. I almost fainted with terror. Jane, I thought. Then a voice said:

"Alice, what are you doing here?"

It was Mr. Bertram and heaven seemed to have dropped down at my feet.

"Oh! is it you? I am so glad, so happy! I was wondering how I could find you. I wanted to look up your address in a directory when I had time."

He looked strange when I mentioned the directory, but a moment later asked anxiously, "What do you mean by time?"

"I haven't a moment now. Oh, please, for heaven's sake, take me away somewhere, quickly, where no one will see us; I have so much to tell you." He glanced hurriedly around, beckoned a cab, put me in, and I heard him say:

"Drive anywhere,—only keep going."

He jumped in, slammed the door, pulled the curtains partly down, then said: "In heaven's name what is the matter?"

I began to laugh, then all in a moment everything seemed to grow dark. I knew nothing for an instant it seemed, but I realized soon that he was chafing my hands and begging me to speak to him. I tried to sit up but was so faint that I could not. He put his arms about me and drew my head on his shoulder. Tears of happiness were in my eyes. I felt so glad to see him again, to feel that I could tell him all—where I was going, and then he could find me,—only he should know, I thought. I felt the tears start down my cheeks, and trying to raise my head he saw them and bending over me kissed them away. Then he drew me to him, kissing me again and again, just as he had the first time. I put my arms around his neck and felt I had nothing to fear in all the wide world.

"Are you strong enough to explain why you are here, all alone?" he asked.

"I'm not alone. I ran away from Miss Hill, who is a prying, deceitful person. I do not know why I feel so faint, but I believe I forgot to eat any breakfast."

"Have you had no luncheon?"

"No, Jane was hurrying to get through,—she said we would have something soon, but I left her. I will tell you all about it, but the carriage makes so much noise," and I paused.

"Wait a moment," he said, and I heard him give some order to the driver. Then he said: "You must not say anything further at present."

Before long we were driving along a tree-lined road. There was a park, I thought, and soon the cab stopped. I was assisted out and was taken into a room. Almost immediately a cup of broth was given me and I felt refreshed at once.

"Now, rest a few moments, then you may have something more substantial. Be quiet until I return."

Soon a good dinner was served, and between the courses I told him all,—that I was to be sent to Europe with Jane, whom I detested, for she had been very unkind to me.

"I will never go,—I will die, away among strangers with her." Then I told him my plan. I should hide until I was eighteen, and that no one was to know where I was hidden but himself.

"I could not endure life without you now," I said.

"Is it so serious as that?" and he smiled.

"You must know it is, now that I belong to you."

"And so you belong to me?" he said slowly.

"Ever since you kissed me out there in the woods, I have thought of nothing else," I replied. "I have never seemed to belong to anyone since I was left an orphan, until I met you, and now I know that heaven has sent you to me and that I am yours, body and soul,—your Alice, who will never kiss anyone but you," and I laughed in sheer delight. Heaven was farther away from me than I knew, for he caught me in his arms and held me in his strong embrace.

"My little girl, my Alice," he murmured, "I love you, darling, darling,—my God I am forgetting all; everything that a man should remember!"

"And so am I. It is sweet to forget; I only want to remember life since I met you," I cried in all innocence, as my lonely

life came up in all its blankness before me. "Why should we not forget the whole world,—only just think of ourselves,—isn't that enough?" I said.

"If you think so, why not?" he answered. Then he poured out some wine, which bubbled and frothed in the glass. "Drink," he said, as he touched my glass with his, "to the memory of the first kiss."

I drank the wine which went through my veins like liquid sunbeams, warming, thrilling and exhilarating. My whole being seemed re-vivified. There was music somewhere,—I heard the sound of a harp, and then all the sweetness of earth's harmonies I had heard yesterday. Was it yesterday, or a thousand years ago? Somewhere in another sphere, in a life forgotten, until now, I had re-lived moments like these. The voice of many waters, the soft strains of music seemed blended into an old new song. The chant of love and heaven and space and time echoed back the melody, for heart had called unto heart, and lips and eyes answered love's sweet hymn. Reason fled, and love usurped her place.

"Dear child, my little love!" I seemed to hear him say. "We have found the Philosopher's Stone; the unsolved question of life—mine and yours—dear one, has been answered. It is love,—love, the one enchantment of human life. We will drink our fill from the fountain which can only purify and justify. A mad love like yours and mine can never be set aside for a cold and chilling idea of duty."

Then I remembered nothing,—only a strange hallucination possessed my brain. I seemed to see my mother. She was in the arms of a man, and while his kisses rained on her face, I felt them. He talked in a low voice that was trembling with love. I knew and felt every kiss, heard every word. It was the delirium of love that blotted out the whole world, leaving passion to usurp the senses,—then a blank,—and it was ages, eons of time before I awoke to begin life again.

The morning sun was shining when I awoke with a shiver of dread and horror. Where was I? I had never seen this room before, I was sure. I got up, but my head seemed to whirl. I could not walk, but staggered to a chair. I tried to think, but thoughts would not come connectedly. Idly I glanced around. I saw a bell, which I finally reached, press-

ing it and falling back in a chair, almost senseless. A woman answered the bell:

"What does madam wish?"

To whom was she speaking, I wondered. I was too ill to look around, but I said, "Where am I?"

"You are in your own room. Your husband brought you here. You were very ill, and I helped undress you and put you to bed."

"My husband!" I gasped, and then the bliss of heaven stole into my racked brain. Then we were married! Why it seemed as though I could recall something of it. He had said something to a man who came into the room when I was dizzy and everything seemed whirling around. I thought, oh, how good of him to make me his wife!

Gradually it all came back to me,—yesterday's flight, my terror, the running away from Jane, and my joy in finding him. Oh! I forgot,—my husband,—I must say, even to myself, I thought.

"But where is he?" I stammered.

"He left word that he was compelled to go away to attend to an important matter. You were to have breakfast when you desired, then rest afterwards until he came. Shall I order for you now?"

She was very gracious and anxious to please me,—so different from those with whom I had been staying.

"I am not hungry. I do not know what I can eat."

"Then I will see to it myself," and she hurried away.

I sat lost in thought until she opened another door and asked me to come in. A cozy little room with a cheerful fire, a piano, books and easy chairs filled the room, and a tray with breakfast was placed on a table near the fire. She was very solicitous, urging me to eat,—I looked so wretched, had I been ill long? she talked in a continuous strain. I found it was not necessary for me to say much. I simply said only a fainting spell,—that my head ached dreadfully and I hoped to be better soon. I was nearly distracted. I wanted to get her out of my sight, to have time to think was all I prayed for just at that moment. When once alone, I laughed in a hysterical way, I suppose, for she knocked at the door and asked if I desired anything. I said, "No, only to be quiet."

Then I thought with delight of Jane's surprise and her fury when I could not be found; of the news she would carry back. Well, I would let them worry for a while. My husband and I would go together, some day, then I would tell them I was married,—that I had thought a surprise of that kind would be better than a year's travel.

So I mused, and wondering a little how strange it was that a priest could be found so quickly, and we be married in such haste. Then it occurred to me that in all probability there was a fear in Mr. Bertram's heart that I would be found and be taken away from him, and that was why he would not wait until the next day. Oh, how dearly I loved him.—mine now and forever! The old life was gone, as was the old, desolate feeling. Kneeling, I thanked heaven for my gift,—the love of a good man, who was so tender and loving to the helpless orphan, and then I lay down on a couch and went to sleep.

When I awoke some one was bending over me. It was my husband. I caught hold of his hand, pressed it to my lips, then held it to my heart. He bent over me.

"My poor little Alice, do you forgive me?"

"Forgive,—I have nothing to forgive. I only know that I bless and love you, my darling, my own!"

"You do love me, sweet Alice?" he said.

"Oh, I cannot tell you how much,—all my life I will spend in trying to tell you what my heart feels. I will live if only to prove how I can and do worship you, my darling, my king! I shall call you my king from now on, and you shall make me your queen or your slave,—I shall not care which, only I shall stipulate that I am never to be parted from you, or at least not long away from your gracious presence."

"But it will be necessary. I cannot be with you all the time,—there are certain duties, you know a man cannot ignore them all."

"We will not discuss duties now," I said. "I want to thank you for your thoughtfulness last night."

"Do you call it thoughtfulness?" he asked in a low voice.

"Certainly I do. You knew I did not want to return, so you made it impossible. I do not understand it all now, but that will come later. Let us be happy; but tell me, when will you take me out for a walk?"

"Not until you are stronger," he said; "then we will drive."

The afternoon was ended. We dined and I felt so well, that I played and sang for him. He was pleased, and begged for another and another song, praising me extravagantly, calling me his nightingale and his dear little song-bird.

"Why, Alice, I did not dream you had such an exquisite voice," he said.

"Well, we have a lot to learn about each other. But then we have a whole lifetime in which to learn it, haven't we?"

"And you have no fears for the future?"

"None," I replied, so long as we both live," and I ran and threw myself in his arms, kissing and caressing him to my heart's content.

* * * * * * * * *

A few days passed,—days of unalloyed happiness. We walked and drove, but usually late in the afternoon, through that glorious park, watching the ocean from some high point, or driving out in the moonlight along the beach. One night he told me that he must be absent for a while on business, and that it would be safer for me to be out of the city during the time.

"Mrs. Andrews is giving up this house. She is not well and needs a rest, she says. How would you like a little journey to Alaska and return perhaps by Yellowstone Park? You have never traveled,—the world is new to you, my dear, and it will serve to occupy your time while I am away. You would be wretched here alone; besides there is danger of someone finding your retreat,—the Brownings would claim you and send you away with Jane, where it would be impossible for me to see you."

"But how could they, now that I belong to you. You have to the right to claim me anywhere?"

"Do you think so?" he said. "But if, when I am gone and they fetched a policeman,—you are not of age yet, you know," and he smiled.

The thought of Jane and her acidulated countenance and her veiled sneers, and the idea of being taken away, filled me with terror. I was the merest babe in matters pertaining to the law, so, though my heart was almost breaking with the idea of going away, I consented. He cheered me up; told me

I must write down every item of travel that interested me and read it to him when I returned.

"But am I not to write you at all while I'm away?" I asked. "I shall be traveling constantly, but I can write to you at certain places. You will have letters at Seattle and Tacoma. I shall address them in an outer envelope to Mrs. Andrews so she can get them from the postoffices. I cannot allow you to hunt up those places,—you might get lost, you know," he said teasingly.

In a short time we were ready. Mrs. Andrews had kindly taken me down-town early one morning after my arrival at her house and I had replenished my wardrobe. I told her that I had left home hurriedly.

"I know all about it. Mr. Bertram told me," and she smiled. "You are not the first one who has not waited for a trousseau."

"Well, I have been spared the trouble. I do not like the bother of clothes," I replied.

"Some day you will change, perhaps. You will always want to look well in the eyes of him you love," she answered.

"Do you think my husband cares? If so, I must buy everything pretty. I had not thought about it. You will help me, won't you, to get what is necessary. You will know best, and I want to look as pretty as possible. After our return, we will discuss the matter seriously. Now, we are to think of our journey only."

* * * * I can write of my heartache and the terrible homesick feeling I experienced in leaving. I had never known the feeling before, for I had not loved anyone at the convent and I never felt at home at the Browning's. I could not speak of it to Mrs. Andrews, though she was kinder than any other woman had ever been to me. I shall write it all down, just as my "King" had asked me; but he can never know, though. I may read this to him some day when I come back to my own. How like death was that parting, but he said I must be brave for his sake and not make it harder for him. It was not to be so very long, the weeks would fly when once I was interested.

I did not sleep much that first night on the cars,—everything was new and strange and the night was hot and uncom-

fortable. At the first peep of day, the train stopped for a moment and I heard the gurgle and dash of running waters. Hurriedly I dressed and stepped out on the platform and took deep breaths of the cool, sweet, pine-scented air.

I watched the limpid, sparkling waters of the Sacramento river, which I knew had its birth farther up in the heart of the Shasta mountains. It sparkled and danced with joy in all its newness, fresh from the fountain source, fed by virgin snows.

So much I had read; but, ah, the thrill of excitement that possessed me and kept me enthralled as we sped on through the whole morning aglow with light and life. I thought if my darling were only with me, earth could hold no greater joy; but in the exhilaration of the atmosphere my spirits rose and I was happier every hour, as we flashed around curves, over bridges and through tunnels.

Someone said, "Look," pointing heavenward, and through the trees and mountain ridges, glancing upward, something pure and white glistened through the blue haze. Still following the outline I saw Shasta's unparalleled dome. I had never seen snow before, and the grandeur and sublimity of that wonderful peak with its glistening crown of white looking down in majesty upon the lower hills, up which we were creeping in sinuous curves,—the train a great dull, creeping thing, winding like a serpent up and up toward that peak, "Lone as God," I had read somewhere—seemed unearthly. Never in all my life had I felt the awe, wonder and adoration that I felt when looking on that marvel of the Creator! My littleness, an atom drifting hither and thither upon the eddies of life. I felt I had never known what strength or stability meant.

The ocean was changing, restless, its waters ever pushing up to the farthest mark, then pulling away as if in rage,—rising, falling, ever and ever. I had watched the sudden glory of the rainbow in its glowing beauty, gleaming meteor-like in the heavens, turn to cold gray nothingness in an instant. The stars went down, the moon changed its full round face and dwindled away to nothing, except a faint curved bent gleam of silver. The flowers came and went, but this I know was here when the "Morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted aloud for joy."

I never before understood why the heathen worshipped idols: a Parsee caressing the warm sunbeams, the devout sun-worshipper turning a rapt face toward the East, humbling himself before the God of day. Surely untutored savages also in the cycles gone by must have wondered and knelt to this great white, glistening Thing, fresh even now, as if just from the Creator's hands.

That first day over those curves and grades, on past the glorious peak, still on through the picturesque Siskiyou mountains, through what to me was unrivaled scenery, left unfading pictures. * * * * A whirl of emotion was mine as we journeyed north, through a succession of mountains and valleys, by rushing rivers and quiet villages,—the days were too short and the nights too long. Then we came to the end of the journey by railroad, and as the sun sank westward in unclouded splendor, still another glorious vision greeted my eyes—Mount Rainier, looming up in grandeur, proud of its two feet nearer heaven than Mount Shasta, more symmetrical, more snowy, its fairy-like peak, glowing warm and rosy in the last rays of the setting sun, while the base and the sides, half-way up, showed but dimly through a blue mist.

Mrs. Andrews hustled around, securing needful articles for our journey; then I found myself aboard a steamer and was assigned a room, and soon the day and the night were lost in the nothingness of sleep.

"Take therefore no thought of tomorrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself."

Crisp waters, fresh winds! A half-glad, half-fearful feeling came over me as I stood on the deck of the ship the next morning, watching the prow cut the gleaming waters like a knife; saw it roll away only to be churned into foam by the wheels which sent us swiftly on and on, until our country was left behind and Alaskan Territory and unknown regions lay beyond.

How very soon I realized the futility of trying to write all that I saw. Something must be written, but, oh, how much I would have to tell in the days to come, when I could nestle down with my head on my husband's lap. There would be enough for years, I was sure, in the twelve hundred miles

of wonderland, of fairyland to me, the broad expanses of the purest, clearest shimmering waters, then the narrow channels and straits. There were abrupt declivities springing from the water's edge thousands of feet high, and oh, the inexpressible beauty of the dear little islands that dot the waters everywhere!

It looks, in going through that inland passage, as if when God had made this earth, He had a bit left on His hands and had shaken it off broadcast upon the waters,—just little staccato-marks to accentuate the beauty, the harmony of the whole,—and, looking upon it, pronounced it good. And they bloom and blossom, and green trees and velvety sward grow down to the very brim, and, forever green and fair, please and delight the few who wander up there.

The second morning out, I was astonished to find a note by my plate at breakfast. The superscription read, *"For Alice."* Tearing it open, I read:

"Good morning, darling! I kiss you from this cruel distance; but this will reach you in time for you to vaguely imagine it one of the sweet waking kisses that we two know, the nectar that has inspired our lives. My darling, my own! Mine own until death! Mine by all the laws of affinity! Would that I could tell you of my love. It seems easier to write it; though I could never make you understand how you crept into my heart, how I resisted temptation, leaving you with that first kiss,—the kiss of love and innocence from your trembling lips. Ah, I knew without the telling, of your fresh young love. I forgot all else but you for the moment, my angel-eyed Alice. I went away, but your dear, tender eyes following,—entreating me from the distance,—seemed to come into my very soul, pleading for me to return.

"Then fate sent you to me. It seems like a dream, a dear sweet dream that haunts me and fills me with dread because of the unconquerable love that has sprung up in my heart for you in the brief time we have known each other. Yet how shall love be gauged? Not by time. And how measured? Its heights, its depths, its immensity are unknown, unquestioned. I want to reassure you, to make you understand, if I, with a nature almost coarse, can feel when you are reading this, the thrill of our dear love which will abide with me,—

you, darling, with your tender sympathetic nature, will respond, and the same sweet longings will fill your waking hours and be reflected in your sleep. Kiss me in your dreams, and I shall feel your soft cheek against mine and the indescribable magnetism of your sweet presence. My heart is with you. YOUR KING."

His first love letter! And I was reading it while speeding on and on, amidst the most beautiful scenery in all the world, I thought. Ah, how bright the day was, and happy me!

I ran to Mrs. Andrews, telling her of the miracle. She disclaimed all knowledge, but was pleased over my joy. I was happier than I had been since I kissed my "King" good-bye. Over and over I read the letter, feasting my eyes on the words,—words his eyes had seen and his pen had traced while his heart prompted the loving message. Then in a blissful reverie I watched the panorama of wonders as we went on. Metlakatla and its neat Indian village, where we purchased curios, came next. Then Fort Wrangle, beyond which we came to Seymour Straits, going on through miles of the most interesting part of the voyage.

I learned that our steamer, drawing seventeen feet of water, must strike the full tide in these narrows, else it would be impossible to go through. A vessel drawing five or six feet could not pass the dangerous sunken reefs at half-tide. The buoys that indicate these rocks are so near each other that the vessel barely has room to turn. I felt no fear whatever, though there were some timid people on board, for it seemed as if we could jump ashore if necessary, in places. I was in the mood to wonder and admire, for the world was a very bright and beautiful one to me.

Emerging from these narrows, I had my first view of a glacier. Very white and beautiful in the distance it looked, but that and the spouting of the whales soon ceased to be of interest, as numerous white specks appeared in the distant waters,—"Icebergs!" and all the field-glasses were out. Nearer and nearer, and we were among them! Oh, the indescribable beauty as they went by! No sculptured images, no paintings, no words can do them justice! Some white as snow, others clear as crystal, and in their depths all the wondrous colors of the sky,—the green translucent depths of the

ocean, emerald hues, sapphires,—a glint of flame, and the glory of them grew and grew upon us until we anchored in front of the Taku Glacier, with the waters one mass of crushed ice and those huge bergs floating rainbow-hued around us. One slipped by, I shall never forget it. On the surface, looking up to the heavens, was a large sphynx-like face. Time, the wondrous sculptor, had wrought a face perfect in shape and symmetry. It seemed pitiful that it

WYNDAM GLACIER.

should drift away into space with the waters dashing over the cold still face. There were fairy barges, animals, castles,—all sorts of strange things to be seen and imagined,—as those bergs slid away and out of sight.

Here, while the ship took in ice for the voyage, we watched the Indians catching seals. Clothed in white garments, with a square sail stretched in front of the prow of the boat, they moved slowly from one floe of ice to another, scarcely to be seen by us even when near. The seals fall easy victims and are either shot or speared with but little trouble.

On reaching Juneau I found two letters in my stateroom. I could not understand the mystery. There were no railroads,—we were on the fastest steamer,—but the joy of receiving letters drove away all thought of how they came. I was in an enchanted world,—all things were possible. I was in such a state of rapture that it seemed useless to speculate on the present or the future, so I locked my door and read while happy tears fell from my eyes:

"Darling mine! I know you will want the kiss I send with this,—know the need you feel for a little word of tenderness away up in those lonely regions of ice and snow. I kiss and love you with all the tenderness I have. God knows you deserve more, for you have filled my waking dreams, my own, my life, my sweet, my all! Love has come so soon into your young life that you cannot realize how vacant indeed are the lives of those who have not learned to love. He is indeed unfortunate who has not the happiness, the sweet content, the delightful frenzy of love; and how doubly blessed is he who possesses the perfect love of a girl like my own, who adds the element of perfect content to my less tender affections,—yet lends by her charms a sweet delirium to his passion. And now, a sweet good morrow, darling, my heart's best love. Though we are separated by many miles, and circumstances may combat our Love's peaceful realm until I see you again, my dreams will be all that is sweet and dear of what was and is to be. A kiss for Alice in Alaskaland.

"My little girl has been wondering what good fairy has given her the messages, and as this is the last stopping place before you turn your dear face toward the southland and me, I will confess. I know the captain and sent him instructions by letter, requesting him to give you these letters. I knew how lonely you would be, and thought a surprise would please you, though I know you will fully appreciate the wonderful scenery of the trip, and I want my sweetheart to enjoy and appreciate all she will see.

"I am to be very busy, partly for others and partly for you, dear, so shall try to be patient until I see you and when I do, ah, when I do, mine own, remember, no expression will be too

affectionate, no caress too gentle, and no love too ecstatic to bestow upon you. I cannot conquer my feelings; can you? I tried, God knows, but now I am in the very depths, or rather, lofty heights of love,—in with that wild abandon, that recognizes no rule of man or law, which even now grows uneasy under simple policy.

"I write this that you may ponder over it. If you could know how sincere have been my efforts to keep you out of my mind long enough to formulate plans for our welfare, you would pity me I know. In moments of your solitude you possibly have thought me lacking in the warmth your deep sympathetic nature craves. Yet my love is deep and sincere. It was born in admiration and matured in that sweet quality called affinity. I shall dream of you, of your face pillowed on my arm, of your sweet lips pressed close to mine, and of pulses quickened by mysterious sympathy,—and of all that is sanctified by love."

So the secret was out about the letters! And I realized how more than thoughtful he had been to write these, hurried as I knew he must have been, and how dear were his messages of love! Surely no girl in the world was ever so blessed in the love of a noble man as I—Alice—whom no one had cared particularly for.

Then I thought perhaps the fault had been mine. I had never cared to make friends, had lived within myself; my books, my music, were all I cared for until I had met my husband—my master. Why, I knew now that I had loved him from the moment when he first spoke to me and held my hand in his warm clasp. If love begets love, why not try to win others and to be more lovable myself. So I reasoned, yet knowing in my heart I wanted no love, no friends, no companionship, save his, my liege lord,—my all,—for all time and eternity. My thoughts were only happy thoughts, and the scenery was enhanced by my mental condition. I was eager to see Juneau, the metropolis of Alaska, though after a brief survey I did not care very much for the place, though it is prettily situated. We visited the Indian village for baskets and curios, but my woman's curiosity was not sufficient

to overcome the overpowering smells with which the houses and inmates are cursed.

I preferred the fresh air, and a talk with a woman who had spent many years here, whose husband was prospecting for a mythical gold mine. Her life was hard, but hope cheered her on. Ah! I thought, what would life be without hope, and I gave her a little parcel, telling her not to open it until after I had gone. There was money enough to relieve her for a time, while her heart fed on hope.

Crossing the two-mile stretch of water that lies between some mines and Juneau we witnessed the finest sunset of the whole journey. I saw the most beautifully colored clouds in the sky and the shimmer of distant water, far distant peaks and nearer ranges of hills, all bathed in a golden haze, to be seen only, I thought, in lands far south of this. The peak towering directly above Juneau, with its gleaming waterfalls and gulches filled with snow-patches here and there almost to water's edge; the verdure also faithfully reproduced in the mirror-like waters, formed a strange contrast, all the glory, the color, light and shimmer of the tropics in front, while near and crowding up under our keel, the shadow phantoms of a winter that rests forever on that three thousand foot peak, towering up so grandly above us.

Though I read and reread my letters, I was inexpressibly lonely that last evening in Juneau. Wrapping my steamer robe about me, I sought a sheltered nook away from the rest of the passengers. I wanted to be alone with my thoughts. The stillness of the night lay upon the waters and the overhanging cliffs,—the hush of a June twilight that seemed unlike any other I had ever known. An opaline light that had the radiance of early dawn, mixed and intermingled with the glow of a sunset that was kissing the sweet dawn of a new-born day was around me, filling my soul with its beauty and strange spell, as the boat steamed slowly away from the wharf at midnight.

A low wailing sound that went to the quick of my heart came to me from the shore, burdened with the very soul of misery and pain.

"Oh! What is it?" I asked as one of the mates passed me.

"Only a Siwash Indian woman wailing for her dead husband," he answered.

How my heart ached for the poor desolate creature. Ah, me! How well I understood,—love was the same everywhere! It is the same through all ages. Civilization has not made or marred it. I had read of Cleopatra's stormy love, and I knew what it meant,—the bible story of Ruth and her love!

Back to my mind like a flash came the unpleasant memory of the Ruth I had known, which stirred me to bitter recollections. I tried to forget, to shake off an uncanny feeling that oppressed me. I went to my room and tried to forget my one hatred; tried to stop my ears, to drive out the sound of that mournful, agonizing wail that came from that desolate widowed savage soul away up here in the wilds, amid the mountains and waste of waters that seemed forgotten by God and almost unknown to man.

Sleep scarcely touched my eyelids ere a bright and sparkling day shone through my window. I arose and going out on deck had my first glimpse of the Muir Glacier through a field-glass, while still thirty-five miles distant.

I saw a misty, frozen, mighty river of ice as it stretched from the water's edge miles and miles away, a luminous haze arising from it, intensified by the dark peaks and gorges guarding it. And ever, as the ship sped on, it grew and grew, into wondrous beauty, culminating in a grand pæan of delight. As the ship slowly floated within a thousand feet, perhaps, directly in front of that strange, weird wall,—a section of hundreds of feet in length and breadth, slid down with the roar of artillery into the water, dashing the spray far up on the walls of ice and causing the breakers to roll on the distant beach.

All the afternoon we were treated to such a display of falling ice as is seldom seen even here. It seemed as if the old glacier was anticipating and giving us our Fourth of July in advance. We were landed on the moraine in small boats, and went up and on over the strange treacherous wonder. We climbed over a steep hill covered with pebbles, but digging into it an inch or so, we found only ice underneath—on and on, with ever those sharp detonations, clear as the

ring of a rifle-shot, only a hundred-fold greater! A roar, a rush of water, then a huge form shoots high in the air, and we know another iceberg is born. The bergs are not so beautiful as at Taku; more dirt, rock and debris being in the ice.

The utter desolation about this vast, solemn, moving thing, the immensity of it, its treacherous crevasses and hidden dangers were appalling to me. Unseen forces seemed reaching, pulling, drawing me toward those vast, blue crevasses; beckoning, urging me toward them. I turned helplessly, uncertain, afraid to move, when someone took my arm. A man with a kind face whom I had seen, and the only passenger with whom I had cared to talk, led me away. I clung to his arm, and I supposed I looked my gratitude, for he said:

"What is the matter? Why were you creeping slowly along toward that crevasse? Did you not know it was dangerous? You must, for you are white and trembling now. Stand still a moment, close your eyes, take a deep breath or so and you will feel better."

I did so.

"Now the color has come back to your face, and now answer my question. What did you mean?" almost sternly. "Not the idea of self-destruction and eternal misery?"

"Oh, no!" I cried; "that was what I feared. I was fascinated and tried to get away. I had asked Mrs. Andrews to leave me alone for a few moments. She is there," I said, pointing to where she sat, a short distance below us.

"I saw you alone, and could not understand how they could have permitted it, so left the others and came to you, and, perhaps—" here a faint smile illumined his features—"I too was impelled to come by a higher power than that which was pulling you down into an icy unknown grave."

"Oh!" I cried, "do not speak of it. Do you think that it means that death was beckoning me, was pulling me down into that icy horror, and just now, when I have so much to live for. Why, I couldn't die just now. I have only been living two or three months!"

"I knew you were young, but it had not occurred to me that it was a question of a month or two." Again he smiled, but it was a kindly re-assuring smile.

"You do not understand," I said, "I am past seventeen, but never knew what life meant, or cared for it very much until recently. Now I have every desire to live,—and live a long life,—for I am very happy."

"I trust you may be so all your life. Try to live so you may have no cause for regrets. Now, here is your friend, you had better go down to the boats at once," and he left me.

"Let us go down, Mrs. Andrews, quickly," I said; "I am so tired."

"You do seem rather shaky. Who is the man you were talking to? He looked like a minister."

"I do not know, he kindly helped me over some very rough places." I could not tell her my strange experience, so we went on in silence.

Back again to the steamer, with my eyes on the wonderful wall, snow-white, save where the new ice shows fresh after the falling bergs, and then the intense blue, the tints that range through all the greens and blues of the painter's palette! The glory of turret, dome and tower; the strange sculptured forms, the vastness, the terror of it all, especially on board the ship with that terrible wall of ice seemingly so near! A single section, larger than usual, an uprising of ice from those terrible depths,—and utter destruction of all would be the result.

And soon, with a last look, I turned my face away, looking southward, while my heart was beating with joy as the boat slowly turned and left that mighty wall of ice, breathing a prayer of thankfulness that I had been permitted to gaze upon this, one of the most inspiring sights of the world, and more than glad to be safe from its terrible, strange mysterious influences.

A night's rest restored my nerves, and at the Kootznahoo fishing banks the next morning I had my first experience in fishing,—as interested in the sport as if there were no glaciers in existence.

My excitement knew no bounds when I brought to the surface a halibut weighing sixty pounds, and later a red-snapper by chance,—the largest of the kind caught, which the captain by special order had served at our table. It was so large that after thirteen of us had eaten, it scarcely showed

mutilation. I was so pleased and delighted over my success that I scarcely felt the blisters on my hands.

Leaving there, we paused a short time at Kilisnoo, then sailed directly to Sitka.

I was interested in the Indian Mission; the natives showed the good work of the missionaries. They appeared neat and clean under the influence of education. At the museum there were some terrible instruments of torture. A branch of a shrub covered with poisonous thorns was shown us. They used to beat their witches to death with these. I afterwards secured a small branch. It was more to me than Indian baskets or curios, for it told of horror and ignorance—of unutterable agony and torture, and always the face of some poor old woman loomed up from the benighted past, and the pitiful fear of it made me say, reverently, "Thank God for those dear missionaries and their work!"

Sitka is called the Naples of America, and is so beautiful that I felt I must, some day, see the other Naples, lying close under the shadows of the treacherous Vesuvius. The channels are filled with islands, large and small. Mount Edgecomb, in the near distance, unlike the volcano, wafting its hot breath over Pompeii, has its extinct crater filled with snow.

The waters are wonderfully transparent, and far down in their icy depths I saw starfish and sea-anemones. The great charm of these waters is not the wonderful blue,—but the idea of a vast, almost unknown region, stretching westward.

Sitka has the charm of age and mystery. It is a clean and neat little town. The walks in the vicinity are beautiful, and the days were perfect; unusually so. One evening I stood with an officer at the marine station, who signaled the lowering of the flag at ten o'clock, and the sound of the sunset gun echoed back from the surrounding hills.

And then in the golden glory of another afternoon we floated away through the most witching scenery of Pearl Straits, on and on, in the glorious day following, and in the soft twilight that came after the bright days.

There has been only twilights further north; where we had eaten midnight suppers when it was light enough to read, but now each day gave way, little by little, to the nights, which

became more sombre and assertive, more conducive to dreams. But it was as if in some dream, for it was fanciful and unreal enough,—that we steamed on amid the grandeur of mountains, of islands, and peaks snow-drifted that were seemingly adrift on a sea of mist, which I appreciated, while longing for land, and—more than all else—letters, the expected after the unexpected.

Tacoma was reached, and I hurried Mrs. Andrews away before she had time to ask for a room, for the longed-for letters.

"Go quickly; I will wait here in the reception-room until you return," I pleaded.

She humored me, and I waited so restlessly I could not sit still. I went to the window, watching the hurrying throng and wondered why I was so stupid that I did not go with her; when instead of waiting I could have held them in my hands,—his letters. It would not have been half so bad as this uncertainty. I would have known at once. Impatiently I beat my fingers against the glass; then I seemed to hear a voice whispering:

"Waiting for letters?"

Startled, I turned quickly, and my darling, my love, my life, stood before me. In an instant I was sobbing out my great longings, and the hurt of absence in my husband's arms.

"Here, girlie, straighten up; don't cry! Why don't you laugh? We are in a public room, you know. I did not mean to startle you so. I expected to come to you when you were safe in your room, but I met Mrs. Andrews down the street. She told me of your impatience and that you were here, and I could not resist the temptation of coming at once."

"Oh! How good you are to come. I did not dream of it, and was so unhappy because I could not go directly to California and you. I think I would have gone. I meant to persuade Mrs. Andrews to take me home at once. I have been up there where it is so cold. I wanted the warm skies at home, and you. It has been so long," I pleaded. "But I have enjoyed it more than I thought possible, with you so far away," I added, lest he should think I had not cared for the trip.

"I am sure you have enjoyed the long absence fully as much as I have, though it is not so very long,—hardly three weeks," he said.

"Yet a whole lifetime seems crowded into these three weeks. But here comes the letter-carrier," as Mrs. Andrews came in, smiling.

"All a cheat," she said, "depriving the Government of its rightful postage. I have nothing, and there is your letter," pointing to my husband.

I laughed and said I would gladly pay the postage on so precious a parcel.

So, jesting and laughing in my unexpected joy, we went to our rooms, which were already provided for us, for the luggage was there and the wily Mrs. Andrews had arranged my belongings. And then we were left alone.

XII

"Ah! Sorrow is a potent enchantress and once she touches the heart, life can never be the same again."

I, who knew them so well, remembered when Bert Wilder met Ruth Carrington at the home of a mutual friend on a fair summer day, and observed that from the first meeting there was a mutual attraction and each seemed to have no thought for others, if only they could be together. Their souls seemed to go out to each other at the moment of their first meeting. They were drawn together by that unseen, invisible influence that is stronger, more lasting than most things tangible,—for it is as tenacious and enduring as life itself, and the mystic something that will endure, some of us hope even beyond life itself.

Bert Wilder's wooing was impetuous like himself. He was not satisfied a moment away from her. When it was not possible to see her he sent notes.

In her happiness and shy sweet love she sent extracts to me and some of the letters were given me to keep later on. They ran in this style:

"* * * * I want you dear! My heart has no room for another. My arms ache with emptiness and are held your way. Come to me, that I may hold you to my heart and feel the sweet June of your lips pressed to mine, for you remind me of all the fair sweet things in nature. You are my inspiration, my motive, my guiding star; my omnipotence, my love! The time is near when I shall come and feast my hungry heart from your dear eyes; when my caresses will soothe the bruises of my absence.

"With every faculty I want you, through the day time, with the last consciousness of sleep, in dreams, with the first bird twitter of early morn, my flesh and mind and soul are craving your touch, your welcoming words, the illumination of your love-lit eyes, the indescribable joy of your presence and the absorbing rapture that my own Ruthie alone can bring me."

"My darling girl:—The mills of fate seem to grind for me only the grist of disappointment, for I am called away and must go without seeing you. God, how lonely it is without you! I have been so busy this week, and also away where there was no chance to write. But with my unavoidable and almost brutal neglect, was unreasonable enough to expect a word from you today, and the dreadful fear came to me that 'maybe she is ceasing to care.'

"It took me an hour before I thought perhaps my darling may be applying the same kind of logic to me. It is an awful long way to you, sweet one, so far that sometimes I look out from the hades of solitude, and almost imagine my own in an unattainable heaven, happy with other angels, and perhaps a rival or two.

"How bitterly I curse the delay, these days of unrest that keep me from you. At least these conditions will envalue the meetings to come and will teach me the blessedness of my darling one. Will teach me I am right when I re-affirm my love. Will teach me new reasons for the truth of the feeble words of love that I have tried to fitly bestow upon her who alone is entitled to them.

"My idol, my darling, my Ruth, my all! Take me into your tender heart today and let me warm it with a love that is undying."

"My Own: Yours of yesterday instructing me that you were going somewhere with somebody, for sometime unmentioned, reached me today. You are a sweet and dutiful girl to ask my consent, and my only wonder is that you did not intensify your interest in my advice by going before you asked it.

"There, sweetheart, quiet the little bit of rebellion that the above has excited. I am only getting even with your little pleasantry. How I would like to be there when you read this, to kiss away the sweet pout that just now is showing as your dear eyes read.

"Ah, my love! Though I shall be very busy during your absence, I will speculate upon its duration—many will be the times that my mind will wander from its subject to its object;

and in day dreams try, try hard to picture its idol's abiding place, and how she is enjoying herself.

"Sometimes in fancy I shall see her wandering through pine-scented woods, or resting beneath some grand, old monarch of the forest, influenced, awed but soothed by the magnificence of nature, and then, mayhap, I will dream we are together and I, smoothing her beautiful hair with the tenderest of touches until—still in fancy—I see her fall asleep while I watch, drinking sweet draughts of love, until she awakes; and I murmuring as I do in reality: God bless her! God bless her!"

"So, my sanctuary of sweets, you purpose giving me a kiss for every word in letters that I carry to the train! Be careful with such rash promises. I'll be spending my days in writing and running to catch trains and the rest of the time computing the number of kisses I am to receive.

"You seem happy in the haven your heart has found. Happy haven, happy heart! Time shall not tear it away nor vicissitudes alter its security, if it lies quiet in the calm of placid love, or turbulent in the delight of active passion. Be sure of rest and response, and always a sympathy to its every beat.

"And now I shall say good night, thinking of the sweet delirium of our united lips."

> "How long would you love me—a lifetime?
> Ah! that is too long—let us say
> A moment. Life's best's but a moment,
> And life itself scarcely a day."

But dear, sweet little Ruth did not know these lines, or if so, would not in her trusting heart have harbored for an instant the idea that Bert's love, so sweet to her in its newness, and so strong in expression, from him whom her heart adored in all the strength and purity of a first love, whose heart had responded to no other soul until he, the ideal of her young dreams came to claim his own, could change.

And one fair, sweet day they were married and he, triumphant, exulting, carried her away to Monterey, where in a cozy retreat, overlooking the peaceful Pacific, they began the new life of oneness as she fondly believed. So beneath

the whispering trees they breathed the air that stole the odors from the unconscious flowers which seemed to bloom for them.

The fulness of the late summer was about them, a soft, blue haze hung over the wide stretch of ocean visible from their retreat. The waters surged up lazily among the rocks, and the kelp that grew in strength and thickness resisted the fierce waves. So they came up languidly on the sloping beach far below them in soothing murmurs.

"My life will be like that," said Ruth, one day.

"What do you mean?" said Bert.

"You are to me what that submarine forest is out there in the waste of waters. The worry and troubles of life will be warded off by your strength and firmness. I shall be safe within the shelter of your arms, and I shall have no fear of future storms."

Why, at the very height of love's glamor and the culmination of realized hopes with her husband, all love, all tenderness, should there arise in her mind, a thought of future storms, when a strength beyond hers would be needed. It was vague, uncertain, like the fleeting shadows of some bird passing for the moment over her, forgotten in the instant, as they two, with clasped hands, watched the rose-clouds in the gleaming West fade into soft pearl tints.

Then they turned their faces eastward and through the tall trees saw the reddish-yellow moon burnishing the woods.

A cool wind sprang up as the sun disappeared. A breath of autumn was in the evening breeze and a few leaves tinged with yellow fell as the rising wind rustled through the heavy summer foliage. There was a shrill reiteration of the cicada that sounded drearily above the tumult of sound. The voices of the dying summer were in Ruth's ears. She caught her breath.

"It will soon be over," she sighed. "The warm palpitating summer here in the mountains. The beautiful flowers and luxuriant growth will feel the chill of the winter. And we, too, must leave with the summer, and I? Well, at least I shall have something to remember. These heavenly days up here away from all the world with no thought save for each other. Surely my heart and my hands have touched

heaven on these high hills, and a little bit of the joy known and felt here must be my inheritance. There can be no low hanging boughs of life, however intricate, that may meet above my head that cannot be brushed aside, or dim the joy of these days."

Their home seemed an ideal one. Bert was handsome and brilliant. He was a successful man, easy in his manners and a thorough man of the world, and was popular with both sexes.

Ruth was more than kind and gracious to all who came to their home. There were no regrets, no doubts in her life; only peace, contentment, and love. A love that was silent and sweet with a perpetual incense that burned upon the altar where she was wont to kneel and pray. But the image she worshipped, the ikon of her admiration was Bert's picture given her before their marriage.

Theirs was a hospitable home and visitors were charmed by the warm, delightful welcome of the charming hostess and the frank, genial Bert who was proud of his wife and his home.

After a time, Ruth's face lost its freshness. She looked like a frail white lily, and she lost interest in theatres and outside amusements. Bert was seen now and then at his club and occasionally at some reception or opera without his wife. To any inquiry he would say she was not equal to it or had a headache and desired to be quiet.

Then one day her friends learned that the little babe which she had so longed for was born, and the next day its little form lay cold in death.

It was weeks before she had strength to receive anyone; and it was before the little one died that a mutual friend had written the news to Edith Hammond of Ruth's baby, and she had not heard of its death. Ruth had not the courage to write of her bereavement and even to her most intimate friends she could not bring herself to discuss it. Her sorrow was her own and too sacred for others.

She was pale and wan, only the shadow of her former self and Bert, who loved life and gaiety, grew strangely restless. He could not understand her regret and longing, her heart-hunger for the dead child. He had only seen it for a moment

before its little life went out, and could not in his strong nature understand the mother's heart.

Often while he slept the sound sleep of exhaustion after an evening spent at the opera or some social function, she would sit far in the night, and watch the gleaming path of the moon on the distant ocean, until the dawn glided over the great waste of waters, her heart, her soul, filled with a sorrow she knew only too well, was not shared by him she loved with all the strength of her being. For when the shaft of woe struck her heart, she turned all the more to him, the father of her dead child, the lover and husband.

The weeks went by, and as time healed her sorrow and health returned, she began to wonder why her husband never asked her to go out with him, not even for a walk or drive. He seemed so engrossed in business which detained him often of evenings. Sometimes there were trips to the country, or a jaunt with "some fellows, you know," always plausible excuses, but never once was she invited to go with him. Her pride would not allow her to ask, so she bravely waited with a sore heart until he should remember.

That his love had waned had never crossed her mind. But that he was worried she knew, for he was restless and would arise in the night and walk back and forth until it seemed her tortured nerves could not endure the strain. And if she timidly questioned or tried to caress him, hoping for a return of the harmony and companionship, he would simply say:

"You do not understand and I cannot tell you now. Please do not worry me."

And she would shrink away hurt and wondering, yet patient, sweet and uncomplaining in all his moods.

It was long afterwards that I knew the whole story. Her sorrow and grief would have driven many women mad or to some terrible revenge.

I will endeavor to write down as I learned from her letters or heard her pitiful stories from her trembling lips from time to time long afterwards.

XIII

"Is there no demon that comes to your harsh night-dreams like a taunting fiend whispering, 'Be satisfied; keep your heart from running over, bridle those affections; there is nothing worth loving?'"

Extracts from Fred Marshall's Diary

Because I can dissemble and make Frank think I am engrossed in our travels I am at war with myself because I cannot forget. I try to forget, heaven knows. Talk and while away the time as best I can with these dark-eyed senoritas but ever and always I see her. I recall her fair face, the beautiful, expressive eyes, that, looking into mine, sent the blood chasing in riotous thrills through my veins, filling my whole soul with a strange sweetness.

She was like the fresh blossoms on the slopes above the sea where we sat on that last day, when the very air was intoxicating with the perfume of flowers, the music of birds that came in ripples and cascades of song, and above us the sapphire heavens and the blue gulfs of air with foamy, fleecy clouds bounding them—vast fleeting shadows chasing each other over the ocean that stretched away to the horizon's rim, smooth and beautiful as I thought our life would be.

That day is painted upon my memory in unfading colors. The sunbeams made a broad way of blinding light upon the waters. I seem to feel once more the fresh winds that came in gusts tossing her beautiful yellow hair about her sweet face in wanton glee. I hear again the faint sound of the breakers that dashed upon the glittering sands so far below us, coming up in an undertone of soothing restfulness. The perfume from the lupins abides with me yet, as even now do I feel the warmth of her kisses and hear her voice in soft whispers repeating:

"I love you—love you, dear, and shall forever!"

She was the enchantress that changed the drowsy old earth for me and made it take on a new life,—a life that glorified

all things, that put new words in my mouth, and made all my vainest dreams seem possible. She was my lark by day and my nightingale at eventide,—sweet, refreshing and inspiring.

That last day was one I shall love to recall while I have life and recollection.

And at the close, we drove homeward through the aromatic groves of acacia and eucalyptus trees from the ocean boulevard, over perfect roads and over the hills on that December day which was delicious with the odors of flowers and riotous vines that grow and blossom even down to the water's edge—homeward through that dream of a park reaching out to the Golden Gate, which knows no winter in all its blossoming beauty—back in the gloaming to the city's glare and noise. The farewell, the last clasp of her soft hands filled me with a rapture so ecstatic that, in a measure, it pained.

And now that the past is only a memory I want nothing so much as the touch of a magic wand, a draught of oblivion from Lethe that would steep my senses into forgetfulness of her whom my soul loved, loves yet, even to my peril.

This Persephone who lured me, charmed me into worshipping her with my whole soul, was like the freshness of the dewdrops in the balmy mornings, sparkling and bright.

All the sweet, pure things in nature remind me of her. The breath of the wild roses was sweet like her own, fair self. The yellow tasseled corn was like her hair, the blue of heaven shone in the depths of her eyes, and her cheeks were like apple blossoms in their delicate tints.

What a flood of tenderness overwhelms me when I think of you, who are my morning star, my heartsease, my blessing.

I cry "pazienza" and wonder if I can be reconciled to my life without you; if ever again the old buoyant life can come to me again—the life I knew and loved when we talked and laughed with the sheer bliss of being alive and together, when all the world was sweet and there seemed no sin or sorrow but a beautiful world of God's creation, wherein we two lived, loved and enjoyed each day in the bliss of perfect trust and sinless happiness.

And now in the bitterness of my heart I know that the paradise lost for me was the veriest fool's paradise that ever existed in a man's brain or heart—that she, with only a written word or two could say there was to be nothing more in the future for us, save the fact that our little farce was ended, and that we two, if we ever met would meet only as friends. That it was utterly useless for me to attempt to see her, for never with her own free will would she see me again. And though I tried vainly to see her, calling often only to be told she was not at home, and learning at last that she had gone away with a party of friends and that Henry Hutton, a man whom I knew for months had loved her—but in vain, as I in my blindness thought, was to be with her on the journey.

It seems I shall go mad grieving over this great sorrow that will not be cast aside, that is with me in all my waking hours and oppresses me even in my dreams. The strangeness of it all. Her inexplicable conduct. Surely it could be nothing but treachery on her part. For I know there was nothing in my life, no word or action of mine that could have reached her even by malice that would have made her believe me false or untrue to her for an instant.

And so my thoughts run on and on, try as I may, to evade my sorrows. I find that I am only treading a circular path, and there seems no prospect of oblivion. I can only hope for time to ease my heart, to wear away even if ever so little the hurt she has given me. To wait as best I may for hope is not dead. It burns faintly within me; and I think that love like mine will yet compel some return. If nothing in nature is wasted, then surely my thoughts, my heartaches and passionate longings cannot be for naught.

Yet unseeing, unknowing, I turn the leaves of my life with eager impatient hands so slow seem the dull pages as I read—as I live them—for my thoughts fly ahead of the hours, the days, wherein I con my daily lesson, and I long to thrust them aside and have this waiting ended.

This love that is at full tide in my heart and beating up in an unbounded fulness, is so great, I know it cannot be endured much longer. The very strength of it must command some return or it shall yet master me.

But until I know—know beyond all doubt that she loves me no longer—I shall wait. When she tells me with her own lips that she scorns my love, then, indeed, I am ready for the grass to grow over me.

XIV

"Arcadia is after all a lotus-eating paradise of blissful ignorance."

I have been prowling about the old city, Jack, while Fred has been, or pretending to be, busy with his palette and paint boxes. But true to my promise I will write you concerning the thing I am most interested in. One little excursion to one of the suburbs I must especially not forget.

Some distance from the city, out on the road to Tacubaya, which in the Aztec days was called Tlacopan, and was the residence of their kings in 1430, I entered an enclosure one day, under an archway, on which was the American eagle. It was holy ground, for it was a cemetery belonging to our government. A high stone wall surrounds a bare acre or two. No green grass or flowers were there. It looked pitiful enough after visiting another cemetery which was beautifully kept. But, desolate as it looked, my countrymen lay in soil belonging to no alien country, but in soil that is sacred for our flag waves over them. It is well that it is so, and I was glad to see it, for no other government, save ours, owns a cemetery for its dead in Mexico.

But for this their bones might not rest in peace but be subject to eviction, as is the rule for non-payment here. And it is scarcely to be wondered at, when one thinks of the room needed in cemeteries here.

In the past twenty-seven years the death rate in the City of Mexico has amounted to two hundred and fifty thousand —nearly as much as the entire population in the city now. Judging from the death rate the climate and other conditions are not the most desirable in the world.

The plazas, churches and market places have occupied a great deal of my spare time. There is always something of interest that is strange and new in this sister republic. And though the City of Mexico is only about as far away from us in California as New York, it is, in many respects, so unlike ours that it savors more of the Orient.

It is needless to tell you that I am thoroughly enjoying the dolce far niente life while harking back to the days of the Toltecs and Aztecs. I have found much that is interesting in the Aztec relics.

In the museum near the Plaza Major, among the many relics of an ancient people, are the Aztec Calendar Stone and the horrible Sacrificial Stone with its circular basin in the center and the groove that drained the blood of the victims, whose bodies were gashed by flint knives, and whose hearts were torn from the palpitating bodies that were stretched upon this relic of revolting barbarism.

There were crude instruments and distorted idols of long ago. There were mummies which history tells us were walled up alive. I saw fragments of a rope which still clung to the ankles of a female suggesting unfathomed horrors. Relics of Hidalgo and the red damask standard of the conquerors, a portrait of Cortez, a shield of Montezuma, are some of the interesting things I recall in the museum of antiquities.

Among many paintings of the old masters in the art galleries are some notable paintings of Mexican artists, among which is one where a father and daughter are presenting a Toltec prince with a new drink—pulque—which proves conclusively to me that the prohibitionists have never flourished in this land flowing with traditional milk—but that pulque, in reality, has irrigated the thirsty throats of the people from the Toltec reign down to the present ruler, Diaz.

I leave the gallery and museum with the grim old gods and strange, distorted idols, remnants of prehistoric ages that would take pages to describe, glancing for a moment at the massive and gaudy carriages of state, and the gold and silver table service of Maximilian.

My thoughts fly back to Queretero, the lonely plain, and the crosses on the silent hill. I think of the wonderful changes in the life of the man who planned the Paseo, the magnificent drive leading out to Chapultepec where the aristocrats drive every evening from four until seven o'clock. Where wealth is displayed in every possible way, in horses and equipages of every description. Where beautiful women display their jewels and exquisite creations from Paris. I think, also, that

Maximilian, like many, planned, but others enjoy the benefits.

We have idled hours away in the Zocalo, the people's park, in front of the old Cathedral. On this same plaza once stood the temple of the Aztecs. Here was the Teocalli or place of sacrifice, and here the great Cathedral, emblem of peace, now stands.

CATHEDRAL AND ZOCALO, MEXICO CITY.

The interior, whose marvelous richness was once a source of wonder, has been looted, as have most of the churches in the Republic.

The exterior, however, is scarcely, if at all, outrivaled in Italy. Its domes and minarets are replicas of what I have seen in Moslem lands.

Spain sent her architects to Mexico, but it is not their carving on facades; not theirs the oddly executed designs I found in so many places that show in all the strange stonework, prehistoric art. We sit here in the twilight and listen to the music of the band while senoras and senoritas stroll by in bright rebosos and coquettish veils.

We have visited the tree of the Noche Triste, under which Cortez wept on the night of his memorable flight in 1520.

We went also to a bull fight, the details of which are too revolting to give you on paper. Suffice it to say that there were throngs of people yelling, throwing the banderillas into the backs and flanks of the bulls; encouraging the matadors, the picadors, frantic with delight as each maddened bull gored some poor old blind-folded horse or when the bull himself dropped dead from a skillful sword thrust.

Five bulls, as many horses and one man, were sacrificed that afternoon. It was the most brutal and debasing sight I have ever witnessed.

Fred had left our box early in the afternoon and I found him outside waiting impatiently for me.

"How could you endure it?" he said.

"I hated to flunk before all those bright-eyed senoritas," I replied. "I was looking more at them—especially when I saw a bull disembowel a horse in a terribly sickening manner. I looked at some beautiful women in a box next to ours and saw them waving their handkerchiefs with delight. It is a study, my dear fellow, and sets me to wondering. If civilization makes our women faint at the sight of blood or cruelty, surely its roots have not struck very deeply in the nerves of femininity as we have seen evidenced here today. The influences of the Sacrificial Stone are still powerful, and the old Aztec idea of sacrifice, whether for the soul's sake or for a Mexican holiday, is still dominant."

I shall not soon forget a day, the last one, I spent at the floating islands. I went down the Viga, the canal, which is supplied with water from Lake Xochimilco, which is only four feet higher than the city.

The water flows barely enough to keep it from stagnation but the sluggish current suits the large flat-bottomed boats that carry all kinds of stuff—hay, wood, vegetables, fruit and flowers—to the markets. An Indian and a pole propel each craft, and the slow-moving current does the rest.

Time is nothing here. The only "rush" orders known in Mexico are for the pulque trains, bringing the national drink to the city, which consumes one hundred thousand pints daily. Pulque will stand only one "tomorrow," and the thirsty will not wait.

Along the canal I saw the unkempt picturesque crowds and filthy lazaroni whose senses were steeped in their favorite drink, pulque, and who were dripping with vermin. The very sight made me feel rather creepy and very shy of being too near them. But though degraded and ragged, there is always a touch of color in the ensemble which makes them picturesque even in their filth.

I look on them and wonder why it is that beggars seem to increase and multiply in warm climates. There seems to be a similarity between them and mosquitoes, both being born of warmth and stagnation. Both being more in evidence in hot than in cold climates.

Among the crowds I saw the dandy, with trousers so tight, it is a marvel how he ever pulls them on or off. The gayly embroidered jacket and cherished sombrero added to the picture.

But I was glad to turn to nature unadorned as the chocolate-colored children crowded around me, beautiful in their nakedness, holding out eager hands while the soft voices pleaded, "Centavo, centavo," and melting eyes looked shyly at me from a tangled mass of hair. The few cents bestowed called forth such radiant looks that I felt it was blessed to give.

It seems to me that among the filthy poor in Rome and Naples, I have never seen such dirt and abject poverty.

Hard as is their lot here I did not pity them as I did the poor abused little burros. Scarcely larger than a good sized dog, they are laden with double their weight and sizes, with all kinds of merchandise. Slabs of stone are slung across their backs. Tottering beneath their burdens they are only a little worse off, however, than the women, who besides carrying heavy weights upon their backs or heads, usually have a baby wrapped in their rebosos, an added burden.

And quite often I saw little girls from eight to ten years of age with infants strapped upon their backs, becoming from earliest youth, beasts of burden also.

I saw the huts made of corn-stalks and mud, the tiny charcoal fires and absence of everything we call comfort in life. And it is not hard to understand that the people in many parts of the town, whose only hope—if hope they have—is starvation or next to it, reason the uselessness of virtue, and prefer vice, for they are pretty sure that even in prison, work is not very severe, and that when death comes to them there —it will not be by starvation.

Fred had preceded me and I found him absorbed in his work.

"Why are you so busy with your brushes? One would think you were an artist and depended on so many yards of canvas for your bread and butter."

"I must do something, old fellow," he said. "You are happy in idleness, while this may seem like work to you, it is play—diversion—and keeps my thoughts occupied in a way. Tell me what you think of this little sketch."

I looked and saw a scene that startled me. It was a picture that was true in the coloring, and with a wealth of bloom and verdure. A fair girl's face peeped out from some tall grasses; a vibrant air was in the picture that seemed wavering amid the tremulous reeds. The girl's figure, even though partially concealed by the grasses, stood out boldly from the canvas. The drapery was perfect in its loose folds, much as I have seen in Russian pictures—bold, yet not severe, but so true that I almost expected to see the wind move the loose sleeve that fell back from an upraised arm that was reaching up for some great clusters of crimson blossoms above her head. One arm held a quantity of the vines that hung in trailing beauty down to her feet. It was a picture reminding me of Corot, it was so sweet and fresh. A springtime air was in the flowers and grasses—and the springtime of youth in the figure of the girl.

"Where did you find that?" I cried, pointing to the girl's face.

"She was here yesterday, and I sketched her, and am finishing the accessories to the picture today."

"Jove, but she is a beauty as you have portrayed her."

"I could not do her justice. You should see her, hear her voice."

"You did not speak to her?" I said.

"Oh, yes. I asked permission of her and her companion, to paint her. If you could have heard her speak in her soft, liquid voweled-haunted Spanish, you would be quite satisfied to live more in the present and not be wasting time over distorted gods and hideous idols. I am to call to see them; I gave them my card and mentioned you. Do you care to go?"

"Certainly. Do you think I have changed my nature entirely because of a bull-fight or two, and the diversion of a

cock-fight now and then? I shall be delighted to meet your fair senorita whenever you choose to go."

We loitered away the whole afternoon, Fred busy part of the time with his work, and I was busy also in watching the people drinking pulque, eating the omnipresent tortilla and tamale, while listening to the twang of guitars and soft voices of the girls coquetting with the boatmen on the canal.

The sun sank lower, the air was still, save a thrill of harmony that reached us as we sat under a great tree watching the changing lights on the sluggish stream. It came in soft, wavering sounds like heavenly music—from nowhere in particular—but there was an ineffable sweetness in the harmony that soothed and hushed all disturbing thoughts.

"Oh, Fred, isn't that delicious music? From where does it come?"

"From the old Cathedral in the city. I heard it last evening. It is the bells ringing for vespers."

"Surely not, and we hear it so far away?"

"It is the altitude and the still atmosphere," he replied. "See those peons now, how wrapt they are in their Ave Marias. It is a sound from heaven to them."

"They may not appreciate the music as we do, for it is exalting and gives me an exultant feeling," I said, "a consciousness of bliss. There is a brooding tenderness in the strangely sweet melody, that seems a mixture of stringed instruments which soothes and drives away all harrowing thoughts, in the vibrant thrills of harmony. But one can readily see its influence on these wretchedly poor peons who listen as if enthralled by the sounds."

The warm sunshine rested upon their bowed heads, the dust-filled air was golden. They, the village and canal were transfigured, and the great steady magnet of the earth seemed to radiate peace and contentment.

Living so close to Nature's heart, they may, possibly, while knowing no better life and still less of the joys and ambitions of a brighter life, be spared the corresponding depths of sorrow and despair. So if they have their daily tortilla and a draught of pulque, the nepenthe that has the power of sending their cares to sleep, with, perhaps, the ineffable joy of a

bull-fight once in a lifetime, the earth for them could hold no greater happiness.

"I know," I continued, "that music has a wonderful effect on many people, and loving it passionately as I do—and knowing its effect on me—I often wonder how far its influence extends in the matter of good or ill in this world."

I believe it was Confucius who said: "If you would know whether a country is well governed and of good morals, listen to its music." If one judges by music, I could believe almost anything that might be laid at China's door when I listen to the music—begging Mozart's pardon—that I hear in Chinatown, if one could call it music. Confucius was a wise man and gave his followers fundamental principles that if lived up to are good enough for any nation. But I fear he knew but little of music.

Do the wheezy, groaning bag-pipes of Scotland teach us anything of their governments? Or does the music of Russia, flung out over the snows and ice-bound Neva from the Winter Palace, help the poor who live within the shadows of the great building, or raise the moral or mental condition of those shut in the grim fortresses of Peter and Paul?

The music is good. I have heard it. But the horrors of the oppressed, the tortures of the condemned in the mines of Siberia—what are we to think of Russian music in connection with goodness and morality?

"We may not be able to understand the effect on different nations," said Fred. "But when one thinks of the harp of Ireland, the lilt of the Creole lute, and the one instrument we can safely call our own, the banjo, each brings different sensations.

"Our music may be as meaningless to the Filipinos and the Chinamen as theirs is to us. But one thing we must admit, that among the uncultivated and uncivilized, whose musical instruments, crude and grotesque as they often are, there is in their music an undertone of misery, a plaintive wail in the minor chords that goes straight to one's heart. At least I have found it so. But how far these impressions influence the uncivilized, we cannot judge."

Just then there came from a garden near-by sounds like the shrill rasping of some great cicada from the depths of a

tangle of vines that died away, then the sounds of a harp in soft, sweet, harmonious vibrations thrilled us. Then tender tones from voices came on the perfumed laden air. It was as if some heavenly choir had rested a moment in the dusk of the eve, and Israfil, the angel of song, had paused to make us feel for a time the wondrous power of music.

And the influence was evident upon the peons who listened with ecstatic attention. Their burdens seem to have left them, joy and happiness shone in their dark eyes, and a bit of heaven seemed to have dropped down in their hearts and they forgot life's woes and sorrows.

It was a moment, a scene that burnt itself into my heart. I felt the inexpressible beauty and solemnity of it and felt also my blood was stirred to greater and better impulses. Fred's face showed his emotions also.

"You are answered," he said. "Look at them," pointing to the people, "and say if you can that music is not elevating and beneficial."

"I am sure of it in some things, and even if momentary only, it helps. It is elevating—even if being the least intellectual of all the arts, it appeals to common humanity and is said by some to extend all through nature. That animal and plant life are affected by music; that buds, blossoms, and especially the sensitive plant, shows the power of music by unfolding its leaves as if it were drinking the sunshine; and that discords will cause it to shiver and close its fronds. If the fibres of a plant are affected, how then can we judge of the effect on the human nerves?"

"It is rather idle to speculate upon the subject as was said in the beginning," replied Fred, "for we know not how far music extends for good or ill. Men march to death at the stirring sounds of music, with eager steps that might lag without the inspiring strains. War, battle, marriage and death—all are accompanied by music. It would be hard to imagine a world without music, and heaven is a promised land of harp and song. So these toiling, helpless, earth atoms, try to bring a little of it into their lives as they journey on through their allotted days, with song and the insidious swing of stringed instruments that cheer, stimulate and are also a narcotic, helping, perhaps, far more than we know."

XV

"Love truly and love long, for it is a gentle thing and sweet in the learning. When love goes out of fashion, heaven will also."

Alice Wrote

I can tell it to my journal, if to no one else, a little bit of the happiness that fell my way during the days that followed. Mrs. Andrews had been sent home and we two journeyed eastward. Alice in fairyland with her prince for an escort.

There was nothing real. It was like magic all the way, and surely none the less when we left the main line and started on another road to Yellowstone Park.

We followed a clear, sparkling river flowing through Paradise Valley. Paradise found, indeed! I remember smiling at a little child who was wild with delight even as I was now, for like the little fellow the world seemed new and fresh to me. He was looking at the bright, sparkling waters of the river.

"Oh, look," he said to me. "The water of the river is washed clean."

His mother explained that they had come from the East and the child had seen the muddy waters of the Yellowstone for several hundred miles. It was as he saw it "clean" and pure; and life was like that to me as we went along that limpid stream, its waters alive with trout and graylings, so my prince explained as we watched it glide under the shadow of rock-ridged peaks and ripple along over its gravel bed between tree-fringed borders.

There was the panorama of the Snow Mountains making a succession of the grandest pictures, and though I am not wise in geological affairs, and not learned in cause and effect, I knew that they were born of volcanic action; that streams of lava had coursed down these peaks and that glaciers had worn and corroded deep rifts and stranded granite and gneiss far up the slopes. The play of wind and water is seen upon

the softer material and the strangest, most fantastic forms of peak and pinnacle, mound and pillar, are everywhere discernible.

There are somber gulches and slopes rich in color. Especially was this very effective at the Devil's Slide, a fiery strip of bright vermilion bordered with red-brown clay and bands of yellow, a smooth and easy slide for his satanic majesty.

I remember the Gardiner River and the first boiling springs flowing therein, where—this being fairyland—they told me one could catch a fish in the cool part of the river, then cook it in the hot water on the other side without unhooking the fish. What a delightful land I thought, and what delicious fish dinners we would have!

Then the scene changed. A storm came up suddenly; we had outside seats and were unprepared for rain, but the driver, an old Californian, learning I was an aborigine, or native to the heath, pulled off his coat and gallantly insisted on covering me with it; surely the good fairies were in evidence, for I was warm and cozy and never a drop of rain touched me until we stopped at our destination. At dinner the prince bending his head and speaking in a low voice, said:

"We are in fairyland now. Will Queen Alice have a glass of wine?"

"Never, never again, whether in fairyland or real land —why should you ask?"

"I was only teasing you," he said, "I did not mean it."

"No, you surely do not want me to be ill, and, oh, that headache! Do you know I never had a headache until that wine you gave me made me feel so strange. Even now I cannot recall much about that night."

"Well, don't try; we'll not speak of it again until we assume our mortal forms and appetites; but, as it is, the dinner is rather good."

So we passed the time indulging in all the sweet and foolish things of love, and no angel or demon was there in my paradise to whisper, "Keep your heart from running over, bridle your affections while you may." I only felt that love, like my soul, was immortal—that it would never know age or death. I knew that my heart echoed the sentiment, "Love —it is stronger than prisons, stronger than sorrow, stronger

than shame; it is stronger even than death." I whispered this to the prince as we walked out once to see those wonderful terrace-building springs.

"Do you mean it, my darling? Is your love so deep, so enduring?" he asked, a strange light in his eyes. "Is it strong enough to endure shame, and the world's scorn? Would you still love me no matter if someone else wanted me or claimed me? You would not turn me away from you or cease to love me?"

"Nothing can separate us so long as we love each other. My love is yours through time and eternity," I answered. "But why do you ask? What is wrong?" for he had grown pale while we were talking.

"Nothing, we are two silly people; let us be happy and enjoy all things as they come to us. Look, dear, did you ever see anything so beautiful?"

In a moment the springs looming up through clouds of steam some two hundred feet above the plateau lay before us. There are snow-white terraces, basins and limpid pools with coatings on the sides, of every delicate tint, cream and salmon colors deepen into brilliant shades, red, brown, green and yellow, and here, too, we saw the most delicate frost work, honeycomb patterns and exquisite designs in coral carvings. Some basins are clear as crystal and some a torquoise blue. The water overflows the basins and rims of the springs in gentle pulsings, noiselessly building up layer after layer of this lovely fretting which crumbles at the slightest touch. The crust in many places is thin and there are ever issuing clouds of steam.

There were the Liberty Cap, Giant's Thumb, Cupid's Cave, and so many places to visit that our time was too short to see all we wished.

I shall hurry on, dear journal, and give as clear an account of the following days as possible. I may want to recall those days when I am old. When we two, if we should live, are old and nearly blind, I will take you out from where you have lain for years, an old, dusty, faded book, yellowed with age and time and read of our visit in fairyland,—the prince and the young fairy who had just been awakened after untold cycles, by the love of her dear prince.

Early the following morning we started out in a carriage with a driver for a tour of the park. The roads were fine and we sped rapidly southward through a magnificent defile, passing through the Golden Gate where there was barely room for the roadway, built along the river and on one side of the cliffs, until we entered an open valley. Following this for some miles we came to the obsidian cliffs. The vertical columns are like those of the Giant's Causeway of which I have read, only these are of glass and glisten like jet.

At the Norris Geyser Basin, we paused for luncheon, then proceeded on our way, coming in a short time to what seemed wonderful to us—our first glimpse of a geyser. We thought the "Minute Man" grand indeed, and could have tarried in the vicinity a whole day, for at every turn something new, strange and fantastic met the glance. The water mutters, gurgles, frying and sputtering beneath and on the surface, and we trod with caution the treacherous ground.

We were hurried on, however, to something more wonderful all that afternoon. I can only write a sort of outline. We saw the lovely falls of the Gibbon River, then crossed Cañon Creek, stopping at Firehole Valley. We rested here comfortably enough after our first delightful day in the park. Near the hotel was a clear, limpid pool, which we visited. Just as I reached the brink, and stooped over to peer down in its depths, a little frog tumbled in; instantly I plunged my hand in to scoop him out. I succeeded, but my hand was badly scalded, and the frog was dead long before I touched him.

We were up with the sun the next morning and off for the Upper Geyser Basin, stopping first at the Fountain Geyser and Paint Pot, a fine white mass of silicious clay, which boils and bubbles like a huge pot of mush. This pot is forty by sixty feet, surrounded by numerous smaller ones of various tints and colors.

Leaving this we hurried on to the Excelsior, the grandest, as we afterwards knew, of all geysers. We crossed the Firehole River on a foot-bridge and went up at once to the edge of the crater. The geyser has not been in action for several years until the present time, and we were most fortunate in witnessing an eruption of the most stupendous geyser

in the world. There was an immense volume of steam as we looked down into the crumbling depths. There were broken walls overhanging those unknown depths, and hollow rumblings were heard and the hot sulphurous smell was overpowering. A few moments only had we thus stood, when a shout of, "Run, run quickly!" from our guide, caused us to stand not on the order of going. We barely had time to reach a safe distance when with an awful noise, an incredible body of water shot up some three hundred feet, carrying with it in its terrible power a perfect shower of stones, some weighing perhaps one hundred pounds. This lasted several minutes. The falling stones, the concussion of the water, the vibrating earth, make even the bravest keep at a safe distance. Nothing more impressive or awe-inspiring have I ever beheld. The Firehole River rises six inches during an eruption, which gave us an idea of the vast amount of water that poured from this geyser, and caused us to think the river aptly named. After the eruption we had a better view of the aperture. It is about two hundred and fifty feet in diameter with walls thirty feet high on one side. The other slopes toward the river and a large volume of water runs over it, spreading over a broad surface, leaving deposits of marvelous beauty, strikingly vivid in coloring. Every shade is here, from the brightest scarlet to delicate rose tints, yellows, browns, vivid greens, wrought and blended into wonderful beauty. There are frostlike materials vibrating with every pulsing of the waters, as frail as beautiful, a touch destroying them. At all times the side of the river next to the geyser is hot, the opposite side having pure cold water. The Prismatic Spring near by is, perhaps, the most beautiful known. The dimensions are about the same as the geyser. In the center, the water is a pale blue, changing to green at the edge. Near the rim are the varied tints which I have described, only intensified. I do not know why they call this Hell's Half Acre, for aside from the geyser, anything more peaceful, more exquisitely lovely could not be imagined.

Leaving this place with regret, we went on past many places of lesser interest, and, on arriving at the hotel at the Upper Basin, tarried only a brief time and then went only

a short distance to the Old Faithful Geyser. This, every sixty minutes, sends up a stream of boiling hot water two hundred feet high. We were here also in time to see it shoot its silvery spray far up in the air, falling, a veritable shower of pearls, eastward, with the loveliest rainbows around it. We were fortunate in having a clear day; for two weeks previous it had rained every day. From here the entire band of geysers, all within an area of half a mile, may be seen and heard as they, singly or in unison, give grand concerts with their steaming trumpets, rumbling and muttering, or in loudest tones. We saw here during the day some of the most noted geysers in action; it would require volumes to describe them all. We wandered from one to another too much engrossed to think how time was flying, forgetting hunger and fatigue till night was upon us and we were forced to leave.

Dante could imagine nothing more desolate and awe-inspiring than is seen here in this basin,—the clouds of steam hanging over it, white wraiths of vapor, ghost-like, floating between the treetops, and the deep mutterings as the earth gurgles as if in throes of agony, the air heavy with sulphurous vapors, while ever shooting up, here and there, is water, veiled in spray, or glittering in the sunlight. No artist could ever paint, no Doré illustrate these marvelous fountains, nature's grand and most gorgeous coloring in this stronghold of the wonderful.

From the Lower Geyser Basin we went to the Grand Cañon and Falls of the Yellowstone. After a long drive we arrived at the hotel, and, without waiting for luncheon, took saddle-horses and rode over a steep bridle-path for several miles along the cañon. The Falls have a brightness and beauty of their own, and, viewed from the dizzy heights above, the Lower Falls are beautiful in the extreme. My horse meant business from the first, and, if he was not of the kind that belonged to Balaam, did all that was necessary without speaking. He knew better than I every vantage-point, and would deliberately walk up to the very verge of the dizzy chasm, and turn himself around for me to wonder and admire. I was in mortal terror at first, and had not much breath left for speaking purposes, for often a single misstep would have sent horse and rider down into those awful depths

where the rushing, foaming river dashed in agony and vain endeavor in its narrow channel, so far below us that never a sound reached us on the tops of these peaks.

After a time I trusted to Providence and let "Peter," have his own way, while I watched with a feeling of envy, the eagles and fish-hawks sailing far below us, sure of themselves, feeding their young in the nests down on those beetling crags which were safe from all marauders.

If I find it impossible to describe the eruption of a geyser, how shall I attempt to tell of this cañon, of its vast pinnacles and sculptured rocks, of the depths, the stillness and solemn silence of this yawning chasm? We had dismounted and clambered down a narrow trail, out on the uttermost verge of a point of rocks hanging directly over the river. It needs a sure foot, and many strong men cannot endure to stand upon that dizzy height. Once in a good position and clinging to a portion of rock, I felt that it was worth risking a life only to stand for a moment and take one glance. The chasm in hues and coloring is as bright as the most brilliant painting. There are all the tints of spring and the gorgeous coloring of autumn. It is as though the most vivid coloring of earth and sky had centered here, or as if the banners of the most brilliant sunset had been caught and imprisoned on those slopes; yet all combined and reproduced could not exceed the loveliness of those downward steeps.

What builders and artists in the dim ages of this old world labored here on tower and dome and Gothic arch! What builders grouped and fashioned in such wondrous beauty or put the flames of colors here and there! And down below all I see the green thread of the soundless river. Silence seals up the past and hovers over the present, and we could only wonder, marvel and adore. This, too, is another day never to be forgotten. One is led on and on in this vast park, being in some sort of a way prepared for these last two days, to the great geysers and lastly to this grand, solemn, gorgeous cañon, from the tumult of yesterday to the air of gentle, all-pervading peace hanging over those peaks,—nature wooing one to repose such as approaches one's idea of eternal rest.

The impressions left upon me can never be forgotten. The days spent in this wonderland were like none other ever

known, perhaps ever will be known to me,—breathing the pure air of the mountains fresh and strong, "The wandering winds of God," sweeping down from those lofty heights; then again the smell from regions below where the earth's heat raged, and sulphurous steam stifled and smothered me. Falling, searing and blighting the earth were streams of scalding water, while others came fresh from the snow-fields higher up, whose white, cold silence could not fret or mar us warmed with the sacred fire of love, which seemed to grow warmer and brighter, if possible, in the sweetness of companionship that was full of joy and peace.

Ah, life in your fair sweet blossoming, how dearer you are growing to me every day! The thought of God's goodness, His tender love protecting us amid all dangers, caring for us two out of the whole world of people, bringing us together and implanting this divine love in our hearts—love for Him, the Creator, and this, His footstool! I bow my head in thankfulness and feel that these days will be like days apart, sacred and dear. Fragrant memories and a hidden sweetness will be mine of them for aye. Alice in fairyland and her prince leading her hither and thither with infinite tenderness and boundless love! Other thoughts, other scenes may come and go, but these days of enchantment will be folded away in my heart and will remain until it shall find unfading remembrances in the "otherwhere" of God's own realm.

XVI

"Friendship is as it were the face and also the raiment of love."

If only I might speak to you tonight, my dearest Aileen, instead of writing, you who have been here and have enjoyed all that I am enjoying—enthralled as I know you were, for Rome enthralls the world by its old religion, its classic memories, its ruins that breathe of dead years, the air of mystery that hovers over the old, enchanted places of which history has told us. Yet since here I feel that history as we read and as we see it seems very different indeed. What did I know of the Porte del Popolo, the Gate of the People, by reading? Now I know and love the scene, while looking down on it from the Pincian Hill, where in the Plaza stands the old obelisk, speaking to me of the time of Rameses, of the Nile, of Moses and the children of Israel—old when the Gauls came through the Gate from the Etruscan Mountains. I look upon the strange old place as in a dream. I know Nero's tomb was here. I know that pagan altars were doomed when Constantine came through the old Gate and brought with him a light that ages have not dimmed—the light of Christianity.

The once famous Corso is interesting to me, not for the sake of historical association only, but simply as I see it now, with the people of today thronging the long, narrow street. I see the pifferari with their cloaks and pipes, priests and brown monks, scarlet seminarists, nuns in black and white, the bersaglieri with hats loaded with cock-plumes resting jauntily on one ear, and the carbinieri in uniform of black, with silver trimmings a bit more in evidence than our policemen, and possibly more necessary. The heavy carts, superb oxen, and the peculiar peasant life interest me far more than the parade of wealth on the Pincian, which is not unlike the display of wealth in any large city here, unless it be the livery of the king and queen and the usual curiosity to see their majesties drive. The tattered coat and frowsy unkempt

hair, the wonderful eyes, the dirt and picturesqueness of the contadina, the shepherds with goatskins over their shoulders, and the horses, adorned with bright rosettes and feathers, passing and repassing in endless confusion like a dream.

There are hours spent in the Borghese Gardens, and beyond the Gate is the osteria on the side of the hill still farther out, with its tables under the ilex trees and swaying vines, where we go at times and eat spaghetti and drink the

PORTE DEL POPOLO AND CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE.

sour wine of the country, in order to see and know better something of the life of the people.

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Since I wrote the foregoing, I have been prowling along the lanes and taking trips into the country. I have been to Soracte, which watches over the Roman Campagna, lying peacefully below with the filmy veil hovering over it, showing dimly its bare and treeless undulating lines. I have loitered, also, among old ruins that were beautiful under overhanging

trees and trailing vines which sheltered them with a fairylike network, softening time's rough usage. Broken columns, capitals, and statuary shattered and half-buried in the soil where bloom sweet-scented flowers in the deathless dust of the Campagna speak of life, sweet and pure, amid desolation.

I sat for hours, or moments, I know not which, on an old wall out on the Via Appia, lost in the beauty of the scene. I looked along the old resurrected road which leads out to fair Frascati. I saw the broken indented lines of crumbling walls and aqueducts. Then my eyes rested upon the rounded girth of the tomb of Cecilia Metelli,—a woman's tomb! The fairest and best of all the scattered and broken heaps and mounds which speak of the dead and forgotten men and women of another age—almost another world it seems to me.

The air was soft and sweet with the odor of newly-turned earth which came with the fragrance of herbs crushed by the feet of the gray oxen, plodding slowly along, pulling the plows that turned the rich soil. Children were singing with the birds in the fields. A thrilling, buoyant life was about me, and I thought of the dead beneath the great, broken and heaped-up masses of stone and mortar, who have in times past enjoyed the same bright sunshine, the sights and sounds that thrilled my heart, so theirs responded to the fair, enchanting days. Old shrines are here where they sang their Ave Marias and vespers in the calm evenings. Love, despair, joy and grief filled their hearts and all the unfathomed yearnings we feel were felt by them—the all of life. They knew, also, who called this place their home, and so must have loved life and country far more than the stranger.

I know that at every turn there is something that appeals, that fascinates and enthralls me. I feel toward Italy, especially toward Rome, as a friend of mine, a man who occupies an exalted position among the great men of earth, wrote me of his love for Jerusalem: "I would rather walk her muddy streets, kneel on Calvary, meditate on the Mount of Olives, and sob in Gethsemane, aye, and starve in a cell there, than occupy that vast palace, the Vatican, or be the Pope and live and feast therein."

His soul is attuned to higher things than worldly glories or bodily comforts.

I enjoy a fair share of the world's best when it means food and raiment, but I, too, can put aside creature comforts and revel in soul-satisfying things, for I find Rome is a place that is to me half reality and half dreamlife. At times I forget that it is all but a dream, when in St. Peter's I hear men and boys sing in the twilight the vesper psalms, or sitting in some dim aisle I see the acolytes swinging the censers, and watch the incense float up and up into the vast dome where the blue wreaths engulf the figures of the white angels far above. The glow of candles shines brightly on priestly groups, their gold-embroidered and crimson and purple robes flame back an answering glow, warm and bright through the incense-weighted air. The music comes sweet and soft like the winds through the trees, a soothing, living sound that carries me on and on past all cares and perplexities until I seem to have left earthly things for a time and have drifted into the realm of paradise. I leave the church with a feeling that a benediction and a blessing from the statues of the popes high above has been showered down upon me. Even marble gives me certain impressions, I felt or sensed it in the grand old church, so I felt it also when I stood before Canova's tomb, and the unbidden tears came to my eyes as I gazed upon the stricken ones mourning there, which moved me more strangely than a number I have seen in real or simulated grief. Only marble! But you will not laugh, I know, when I say I would rather kiss the lips of the statue of Antinous than many I have seen that were less cold, perhaps, but the lips of marble, cold, clean and tasteless, are preferable, to a taste one doesn't like.

A last glance at the great central altar with its lights that are ever bright around the shrine of the apostle, at the enormous pillars, at the statues in mysterious niches, the mosaics and silent aisles, leaves an impression, enchanting, soothing and restful, and echo of the past a hope of something beyond this earth-life which remains in my soul and stays with me, aye, and will remain for all time I know.

Then half-dazed I find myself on the Ponto Angelo, the bridge which spans the Tiber, and which leads to the old

Castle Angelo, the tomb of a pagan emperor. Under these breezy statues of Bernini that make me feel as if there was a strong wind blowing, I raised my face expecting to feel a breath from the Pincio, but it is only an illusion—a way those old masters had. I have felt the galling chains of servitude gazing on the sorrowful faces of the Dacian captives in carved stone, lining the road leading up to the Pincio, and have felt the agony of the Laocoon. The spirit of the Greek slaves that decorated and beautified Rome is extant, and though they wrought in bondage, the art that Romans were never original in was borrowed or stolen from them. Yet, nevertheless, it was art that has outlasted Roman cruelty.

I saw the wine-red of the after-glow that gleaming in the west was reflected in the color-soaked waters of the Tiber; while in the east the sky glowed like an opal's heart, and under the pale light the towers gleamed, and the light flashed on the dome of St. Peter's that was seemingly afloat like some great gray balloon in the opaline mists hovering over the city now silent on her seven hills.

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Another day that burnt itself on memory's tablets was when I stood upon the slopes of the Alban Hills and looked over the Campagna towards Rome, on and beyond, toward the west where the blue haze rose above the Mediterranean. There were clustering ilex trees with deep green foliage, and the grayish green of the olive groves, vineyards and plowed fields, and it seems as though I have added something new, acquired from the great world-heart that is the apotheosis of rest, in wandering out and among these old historical places that are quieting and restful. My din-distraught ears have been blest by the silences of the calm, far-reaching spaces, for they hold the essence and spirit of quietude. My eyes feasted upon the windswept, waving fields of grain and the opalescences of waters rimmed by wreaths in monotonic gradations of color.

I found it necessary to leave the picture galleries, the Vatican with its art treasures, the churches and countless places with their inexhaustible stores of paintings, statuaries, and bronzes that dominate, fascinate and haunt one's days and

follow even in dreams. I was weary of cold halls and of antiquities, stifled by the musty air of crypts and catacombs and the forgotten dust of the one-time men whose bones now figure in that triumph of grotesque skill, the skeleton-decorated church of the Capucines. I shrunk from the gloom of the Mamertime prison where Peter and Paul were imprisoned and the black hole where Jugurtha was lowered and left to starve, until my soul sickened of it all and my whole being cried for a rest. Hence, I sought the peace of the mountains, the calm of the woods, and found that which my senses craved, and know that nature answered my appeal and healed the ravages of weeks spent in the complexities of sight-seeing. For I was refreshed and soothed by the magic of change, the inertia of repose, as well as being charmed and interested by the peasant life about me, picturesque looking shepherds, children with wonderful eyes looking shyly at me from locks all a-tangle from wanton winds, utterly unlike children seen in our own country.

Women in bright colored garments were singing as they ever are here, snatches of song, natural as wildbird notes, while they gathered the fragole—wood berries—in the warm spring day—and I, idle, yet loving it, for it is an idleness that absorbs the things panoramic about me and leaves its influence whether I will or not; for I simply absorb the beauty of the place, the strange people and their simple life about me.

The days go too fast. On one such as I write, I feel how grand it would be if only a modern Joshua could stay the all too fleeting hours, and not let the glorious vision fade too quickly. For on days like this, when I am away from Rome and the ruins that exhaust while they interest and instruct, outside her walls I live not so much in bygone days as in the present. The charm of the now suffices for me. I am a sort of shuttle weaving beautiful fabrics for memory's halls, the woof of fancy and web of reality of the past and present, busy and happy in my weaving.

O Aileen dear, this is living, not existing as I was before I came here. Happy days! Of some I write you and today especially I wish to describe to you, for I have felt the perfumed winds of the young spring sweeter for me to breathe

than the air in cells and catacombs, which other nostrils breathed long ago. While the churches are interesting, there is a smell of decay within their walls; they do not take hold of me or make me feel the nearness of heaven that possesses me up here in the hills.

Among the groves one does not think of evil, or of the satan-haunted pictures around the sacred altars. In the woods one imbibes the gospel of the Christ of love, and here I feel, know, and can understand the Creator far better than in human erected temples. I listen to Him through the sweet bird-notes that come rioting and rollicking in sweetness to my thievish ears, which hoard the music while my soul rejoices in the tender melody long after the vibrant air is silent. I am absorbed in sweet reveries of the goodness of the Maker of the universe, that passes into a momentary forgetfulness, a delicious, dreamless "forgetery," a short, sweet eternity of peace.

Then music, sweet, changing and elusive, as the perfumes of the damp mosses and tiny woodland flowers, awoke me to consciousness, a wordless music that came from the upper world as if it might be the songs of seraphim and cherubim. It was only the still, small voices of the woods, of insect life, and of leaves whispering to each other, nature singing herself to sleep in the dim evening hours, lulling me to semi-forgetfulness, once again by the spirit of peace. Then a low, ominous sound thrilled me like an electric shock. I arose from the mossy seat and looking westward saw a shower in the distance, showing luminant as the rays of the sun broke through, and the long lances of rain shot fiercely down on the dry earth. The clouds advanced and retreated, then piled fiercely together like contending armies, while heaven's artillery boomed in active encounter; the deep-toned thunder crashing, breaking and sundering the black clouds, while flashes of lightning came with blinding fury, zigzaging across the heavens, short, sharp, decisive, awe-inspiring, and grand in its power and uncontrolled energy. Then the clouds parted, the mutterings died away, and the heavens washed clean were one great sapphire above me.

The majesty of nature, alluring, inspiring, commanding in threatening messages from the clouds was soothing later in

the musical cadences of the rustling pine-tops far above me. Strong in the strength of years, they tell of the days gone by that helped them to bear the storms, and they seem to reach out protecting arms to the weak mortal beneath them who realizes in her weakness that the best that is within her has been culled from nature, whose lessons have sunk deep into her heart, and the wisdom learned in the haunts of the wild have been more than all else. And then the herds with tinkling bells descended the trails. Evening flung her mantle over the Campagna; laughter and song from the lower levels reached me, mingled with the sweet-sounding bells of unseen churches; Pan, it seemed, was playing upon his pipes in the sweet wildness, but it was only the vesper hour—"gratia plena"— until the shadows dropped and night closed about the contadina, and my day, carissima, is done.

All these things have rested and made me ready to continue my rambles in Rome. I visited some places for the last time, have seen the crimson blossoms, the violets and honeysuckle, earth's dear, familiar flowers, growing in the Pope's gardens, as they do by the humblest cottage, and my weary feet once again wandered through those miles of halls and rooms in the Vatican stored with treasures gathered from all over the world. I loitered once more under the colonnades and listened to the splash of the fountains, saw the green, mossy circle made by their spray, and looked my last upon the old obelisk and bronze gate. I watched the people surging through the narrow streets, and peered into doors blackened by time and smoke, cheerless and dreary within. The cold stone floors looked damp and gloomy. It is no wonder that people love the streets and the sunshine in Rome. I watched the throngs go by from Monte Cavallo guarded by the horsemen, and from the Via Sistina, down below the long flight of steps where are the models, I saw the crowds around the old marble boat in the Piazza di Spagna, where are great heaps of flowers, anemones, narcissus, and other early spring flowers, which glisten with the spray from the sparkling, splashing up-gush of waters where the beggars shyly ask for soldi. Fruit-sellers crying, "fragola, fragola," and the wood-carriers with wisplike bundles of firewood calling out, "fascinotti," come in the hushed twilight to me. All these will

come to my mental vision and hearing long after I have left them behind me.

I have stood for the last time on the Palatine and Aventine Hills, have mused on the crumbling seats of the Colosseum, whose broken walls still house the old horrors that have been enacted within their enclosed spaces, and strangely enough while in the forum certain words uttered by Cæsar came to me. "After death there is nothing." While it was his ultimatum, and because of his knowledge of the crookedness in human nature, his wish, perhaps, was father to the thought. Most of us believe and hope for something different, and while we may have a theological justification for every sin, we formulate excuses for most of them and trust for an even balance for the few good deeds performed. If there were nothing after death, how worse than useless the blood of martyrs! There must be a reckoning in the unknown country toward which we are all journeying, those mysterious regions which are our ultimate destination, the destination vague and uncertain as we go, yet hoping and trusting that there will be something in the undiscovered country toward which we hopefully and trustfully travel. I think there will be something for those who deserve it, an eternity of joy and happiness in traversing celestial worlds, wherein there will be no troubled recollections of pain, grief and sorrow. That will be paradise indeed, where there will be no disillusions, but once beyond the portal, safe from all the ills of this world, its uncertainties and woes,—it will be heaven indeed.

EDITH.

XVII

"Like the stalks of wheat in the fields
So flourish and wave in the mind of man,
His thoughts.
But the delicate fancies of love
Are like gay little intermingled blossoms
Of red and blue flowers."

Jack, old fellow, your notes have been so confoundedly brief lately that I am minded to follow suit instead of sending such lengthy epistles; still, I know your devotion to business, so am disposed to be lenient and humor you, especially when you flatter me and say that you are seeing things through my eyes, without the time or trouble of traveling. This appeases me, as you knew it would.

I trust I may not have read and understood your letters clearly, wherein you speak of Wilder and Ruth. Surely Bert could not neglect that dear little wife of his so soon after marriage. They seemed very happy. I thought theirs would be the ideal marriage and their home one in every sense of the word for themselves and their friends. I know he was always selfish in regard to his own pleasures and amusements; that he brooked restraint and never allowed anyone to interfere with his plans for enjoyment; also, that he was at times rather apt to be careless as to what the dear world might say, but he is such a charming host and companion that he has always been very popular.

He seemed madly in love with Ruth and I thought when they were married he would make a model husband. Strange the difference between pursuit and possession—here is Fred wasting hours, when he should be asleep thinking over his life's tragedy, as he believes it, because he loves a girl who is probably not losing any sleep over him. And Wilder, now that the excitement of pursuit has settled down into the monotony of possession, is restive, and is easing the knot of the matrimonial halter. It makes me better satisfied with my life when I see what effect a large dose of love seems to

have on some people. I think, however, Fred is getting over the veal stage, and have hopes that he will not lose so much sleep as he has.

We have met some charming people here. There is a girl whose portrait he has painted, who is delightful if you could see her and hear her soft voice in her own tongue, or her efforts to master our harsher language, I think even you the dear old busy drone, might say good-bye to business and try the easy life I am living for a time; and you would find life all the sweeter for doing nothing for a while.

And now I must tell you something further of our sojourn here. The suburbs of the City of Mexico were more attractive to me than the city, interesting as it is. Electric cars running with the speed of railroad trains carry one to many a charming spot. I recall one afternoon at Guadalupe, where is the one church in the republic that has not been despoiled of its gold and jewels. It is built where there was a pagan sanctuary over 1,000 years ago. The Spaniards destroyed it, and a vision appeared to a faithful Indian. The result beginning in the fifteenth century is shown now in this beautiful church. The Mother of Christ is now knelt to instead of the heathen mother of gods.

David, the Minstrel King, never yearned for the water of the Well of Bethlehem that is "by the gate" with greater longing than do these poor devotees who come from remote parts of the republic. A pilgrimage of one hundred miles is made by many yearly to the shrine, to drink the water of the magic well at the church of the Guadalupe. They climb the hill,

> "The world's great altar stairs
> That slope through darkness up to God,"

and worship in the sanctuary, the earth-worn and weary, in rags, by the thousands, even as the Russian and other pilgrims go now to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. A long flight of stone steps leads up to the summit of the hill. A chapel and cemetery are now where the traditional Indian gathered the miraculous flowers. I looked from this hill, the holiest shrine in Mexico, and saw the great cathedral's towers and the domes and minarets of countless monestaries, churches and convents. There was Lake Tezcuco, a shimmering misty

blue, other lakes and villages, Chapultepec and the lava beds in the distance, from whence came the sacrificial stones; an entrancing view from every point one may look. Rimmed by mountains, the Valley of Mexico is unsurpassed by any I have seen.

* * * * * * * * *

Different thoughts were mine when I visited other suburbs —Churubusco, Tacubaya, Chapultepec, San Angel and Coyoacan, in them is such a blending of the old and the modern. What pictures and phantoms of the past crowded my mind as I wandered along green lanes, under old gray walls and arches that looked down upon Cortez when he lived there and at Coyoacan, where he established the seat of government in 1521. His dwelling is here and the church where he worshipped—whether before or after he murdered his wife, I know not—is here also, grand in its gray old age. Its dome, tower, arch and columns gave me a moment in the Orient and a breath from Moscow. Arched entrances showing the acanthus leaves sent me back to Greece. The Corinthian and Ionic were suggested, and stray bits of Byzantine carvings elbow the modern steam and electric cars.

My mind slipped down the centuries from Cortez the Conqueror, to a later time. I thought of Scott and his resistless soldiers who saw these same scenes, the grim old walls and lanes leading away into the country, that doubtless were radiant then, as now in the wealth of vine and bloom. The gray mosses on the sunless side of the stone walls speak of age and gloom; the flowers, of the present only.

Scott was victorious at Churubusco and Chapultepec, sweeping on into the City of Mexico. I could scarcely imagine, however, that this sleepy old town, along whose rough, stony streets I heard the patois and soft "ssh-ssh" of the donkey boys, and the "pff-pff" of sandaled feet on the rough, uneven streets, could ever have echoed the tread of the intrepid soldiers under Scott, Lee and Grant, or that the sound of drums and music, with flags—our own—were ever heard and seen here in this perfumed atmosphere where the cloistered nooks bespeak devotion and prayer. Yet I know that in this region Grant and Lee fought side by side, endur-

ing all the hardships of war for one flag—the stars and stripes—united in one common cause, yet destined to meet not many years after under separate flags in a war whose equal the world has seldom if ever known.

At Churubusco, where a battle was fought in 1847, once stood the city of Huitzilopochtlih and a temple built by the Aztecs. If there were evil spirits and demons as they imagined in those days, they have departed to fitter howling places long ago, for what was the city once is a lazy, quiet place now. In this vicinity are raised most of the flowers that supply the markets of the city. There are vegetable gardens also, though there seemed but little attention paid to fruit trees, a good apple being a novelty here, but the fields of the maguey plants are in fine condition. There are various fruits, including the cactus which I found rather insipid. Melons and cucumbers grow on trees in Mexico, and it is a pity they have not found a potato tree. The average Mexican potatoes are about the size of a large marble and sell six for a centavo; green beans and tiny peppers also sell by the half dozen. I noticed that peas were always shelled, so the customer knows what he is buying. There were in the market great bunches of grass which the natives used for food; also wild sweet potatoes, stringy and unpalatable, which were freely offered for us to taste.

At San Angel, another pretty suburb visited, we were invited to partake of the afternoon feast, tortillas, pulque and tamales. There was in the air an odor of meat, cooked and uncooked. I saw the heads and feet of animals and fowls cooked, and saw people buying the entrails for food—nothing is wasted here. No, we did not care for any burnt offerings that day, so politely declined the generosity of the suave owner of the eating-place. San Angel, however, is very pretty and the summer resort for the wealthy of the city. Tacubaya vies with it in lovely gardens, parks, trees and flowers—wealth and poverty side by side. Nowhere can be seen stronger contrasts—wealth in its magnificence, and poverty in all its grimness; the walled-in streets, the overburdened poor in the dust—such a medley—Palestine and Damascus, the East without the fez; for here, as there, no matter how rough and thorny the way, gaunt poverty stalks along with

the sore and bleeding feet of these wretched peons. Someone wrote that Christ was only possible in a barefoot coun-

HARVESTING THE CORN IN MEXICO.

try, and that the few who wore shoes murdered him. Will one ever arise to aid and uplift the poor of Mexico?

And then from the terraces and bastions of Chapultepec where the president lives in summer, I looked out over a

grandly beautiful country, and thought that all things are possible. I know that the country has improved more in the past decade than in one hundred years before. I know, too, that American and English capital is revolutionizing the country. Under such regime who shall stay the hand of progress? Hopefully I dismissed the thoughts that were repulsive and enjoyed the magnificent views. I loitered along the terrace, and saw the modern work due to Maximilian—the beautiful marble and Pompeiian style. Fitting indeed is this place for the president; and what memories cluster around it, for it has been a royal retreat for the rulers for six hundred years. Through the groves of cypress trees and prowling through the grounds far below that jewel set in porphyry, I saw the castle two hundred feet above the plain. I know that this was once an island in Lake Tezcuco, which is now several miles distant. On the eastern side are traces of Aztec carvings. High up on the summit there was a temple, and on this hill is a cave which was a sanctuary of one of their Gods—the Spirit of the Murmuring Spring. How those old pagans loved nature! Their gods were many. There were Gods of Air, Water, Fire, etc. All were worshiped and although their way was not ours, we, who love nature, have something approaching reverence in our breasts for those dear old heathens. On another side of this historical hill is a spring which supplies a portion of the water for the City of Mexico. Along the paseo at the foot of the slope, are the arches of the stone aqueducts.

I saw the cadets of this West Point of Mexico, and then I paused at a place which the cadets and the nation honor, and plucked a spray of myrtle that twines about the shaft at the foot of the hill, erected in memory of the brave cadets who fell in battle at the storming of Chapultepec. We rested a while in the Plaza de Cartegena, where are trees and fountains and seats for the weary, and watched the throngs of people. We heard the music throb in the dusky afternoon, then went back to the city of fabulous wealth and dreamed of its strange past.

Life is enjoyed by contrasts, and when weary with historical places and Aztec horrors, we found relief in the modern and up-to-date shops. There are jewelry establish-

ments vieing with New York's best and the Celaya candy is equal to Huyler's. Fairylike confections come from Paris. The best of imported articles are here, for there is great wealth in the city as well as great poverty.

No matter how hurried the tourist may be, he soon becomes acquainted with the noon-hour habit and knows that for an hour and a half the shops are closed. It is usually like holiday during the noon siesta. An American who is in business here said it was hard to become accustomed to the idea of closing the shop and taking a noon nap, but that after acquiring the habit he did not know how he could live without it; that it was better for them all, and the rest was made up in zeal and energy afterward. How well we might emulate them in this respect in California.

The noon-hour I often enjoyed in the Plaza, musing on the life about me. The thrifty venders of all sorts of wares and fruits, nuts, narancas (oranges), cakes and sweets in almost every namable form, plied their vocation. I watched the crowd on the cars, which are arranged for different classes—a fine thing in this country—though the tercera, or third class, in the railroad trains is devoid of comfort. The seats are placed lengthwise in the cars, and are mere benches without backs. The carriages also have different colored flags denoting the price per hour. Hence, there is no haggling about prices nor any mistakes.

We haunted the shops for curios, photographs, etc., and rarely ever tired of the markets, learning something from their primitive ways, and more still of the products and the unknown fruits and roots used by the natives. Often in my saunterings I saw priests going the rounds of the markets collecting money from the poor creatures who seemed to have barely sufficient to keep life in their shrunken bodies. I spoke to a girl who was so shriveled that she looked like a nubbin among a lot of full-grown ears of corn. The frame was there, but she had never filled out.

"Why do you give him money when you seem to need it so badly?" I asked.

"We do not want to, but are forced to give it," was the answer.

And the itching palm of the church takes from the poor, who must give, though poor, that which is so badly needed in this, for a promise of something better in the next world. So in the name of the gentle Christ, whose thought was always for the needy, these priests in high hats prance through the markets and glean what they do not obtain in the churches. Some of these people are, I think, from their mutterings and evident discontent, learning to do without the middlemen to some extent. They are married without their aid, and are born in unofficial capacity; but, so far, as a rule, are afraid to pass over to the unknown without aid of especially appointed agents. Down here they need about all they can get in this life to make it endurable, and if the Church would levy taxes upon the rich and spare the poor, life would not be complex, but simple. And instinct, true now and unerring, as when one of earth's poor recognized the Divinity and poured the precious ointment upon His head—it was the learned and respectable lawyer who reproved her, and who was economical—will lead them aright, and teachings will be more effective if given freely without asking for money. Surely, if those in authority can promise them a free pass across the borderland, let them have the benefit without money and without price. Was it not Heine who wrote:

"The human spirit has its rights and will not be rocked to sleep by the lullaby of church bells.

"Men will no longer be put off with promissory notes upon heaven."

Down here in the tropics all the sweetness, all the music and lullabys, that can be given to soothe existence, are sorely needed.

FRANK.

XVIII

"I remember the bright spring garlands,
The gold that spangled the green
And the purple on fairy-far lands,
And the white and red blooms seen
From the spot where we last lay dreaming
Together, you and I,
The soft grass beneath us gleaming,
Above us the great grave sky."

As Written in the Journal by Alice

And so we came from the enchanting region back to the road bounded by two glittering threads of steel, on and on rushing back to San Francisco, the city by the sea, which for some unknown reason I dreaded. Those few days of undivided companionship with the man I adored made me dread the thought of returning home, where I knew there must be hours of loneliness when business would claim my husband, as it had in the short time I was with him before going to Alaska.

Before reaching the city, my fears were realized, for he drew me close to him in the privacy of our drawing-room and said that we must plan for the future.

"Why must we plan? Is it not better to live each day without plans?" I said, laughing and smoothing his face as I nestled in his arms.

"Far better, if we only might, but, my sweetheart, it is impossible. We have been the merest infants in wonderland, now it is the hard old world we must face and snatch what joy we can as the days go by. Mrs. Andrews will meet us at the station in Oakland. I shall be compelled to leave you and go directly on to San Francisco. You will go with her to a cozy little home I have prepared for you, which I hope you will like. I will not be able to see you for a day or so, perhaps longer; but as soon as it is possible, dear, I will come to you. Now cheer up, I cannot endure to see your dear eyes dimmed with tears. I have at greater cost

than you can imagine stolen the time to have this little vacation with you. It has been worth all the sacrifice, the worry and trouble that has been greater than you could dream."

"You speak of cost—if it is a matter of money"—I began, but he stopped me with a gesture.

"It is not a question of money. There are more serious considerations of which we will talk some other time. It is enough for you to know now that I cannot be with you when you get the first peep into your little home. You must love it for my sake and be contented and happy as any little birdie in its nest. I am sure you will make it a haven of rest for me when I come to you, weary with my cares; for I have them, my darling, greater I feel now since I love you so than I ever had before."

There was such a look of anguish in his eyes that, though my heart was breaking with thought of separation and the sickening sense of going away from him, I resolved that I would not pain him, but would assume a cheerfulness I did not feel. So I began asking him questions about the house, if there was a piano and books that I might keep employed while waiting for him.

"I have tried to think of everything for your comfort," he said, "and I shall look forward to many a blissful hour with my Alice. She will sing, play or read to me when I come. And I want you to know that I will come as often as it is possible. You must never doubt that—will you, my life, my joy?" he said.

Soothing, caressing me and bidding me be of good cheer, he turned me over to the kind Mrs. Andrews and I was hustled away * * * It was a very charming nest, indeed, that I found. Evidences of his care and love were there to prove his desire to please, and I was delighted with my house and surroundings. Away back from the city on a knoll, peeping out from clustering vines and shade trees, the cottage was secluded from the winds and the world at large, hedged in by roses and a wilderness of bloom. It would have been heavenly if only I were not alone, but I tried to console myself with the comforting thought of how much happier I was though alone than I was before I knew my

darling. The idea of Jane and of traveling with her made me thank heaven I had been spared that horror.

* * * * * * * * *

A letter, dear journal, came this morning. I did not think I could endure another day, though this is the second day since I arrived.

"My angel, I know you wanted some token this morning. You were wondering if I would not come. You were restless yesterday, and last night your pillow was wet with tears, I know, I felt them. They fell into the quick of my heart—how I wanted to kiss them away—and though I cannot come to you at least for two or three days yet, you will before long be safe in my arms, my love, my soul! I will come just as soon as I possibly can; I kiss and love you, sweet one, be patient and live with me in the memory of the happy hours passed, and think of those yet to come, dear one, until we meet."

I carried that letter in my bosom, read it until every word was imprinted on my heart, and then with the morning came another message.

"Is my bird singing in her dear little nest this morning? Is her heart made just a little easier by the written words of love which I fain would whisper in her pretty ears, while looking into her love-lit eyes. Only three days, sweetheart, since we looked into each other's eyes, and felt our hearts thrill with the great love that is implanted within them; yet it seems so long, so long, dreary and desolate enough to have been an age since I felt the tender touches of soft hands thrilling me with that inexplicable something which philosophy cannot explain and which scoffs philosophy. The fond kisses, pure as love can make them, burn upon my lips which are hungry for more.

"Three days! Ah, my loved one, if every day we are apart is as long to you as it has been to me, we are both to be pitied. We might have been spared much pain and sorrow had we never met, but the fates decreed that we meet

and the fact is engraved on our hearts with a potency that nor time nor circumstances nor conditions can change. Time may alter our opportunities, circumstances may throw between us an unspeakable chasm, conditions separate us, but one or all cannot make our hearts forget. I shall live on, hope on for the hour when I may come to you, who are a part of me—of my life, of all I ever hope to be. My dear one, kiss me and come to me in my dreams and bless my lonely heart."

I am wondering, my silent confidant, what my love means by "unspeakable chasm," and wondering also why he does not tell me where his office is that I may write to him. I shall ask him. We both forgot, I, to ask, he to tell me. We are very stupid, dear journal, not to think. Why, I might be very ill and could not send for him. The thought is appalling. Mrs. Andrews must know. I shall ask her. Why had I not thought of it? No, I will wait until he comes. She might think it very odd—as it would be—for me to ask her my husband's address, and now that I think seriously it is odd and strange.

Why has he never spoken of his place of business? How would I ever have found him except for that chance meeting, and why was he so desirous that I write my thoughts, my experiences in traveling in my journal and not to him? Stupid again!—it was because he was coming to meet me and bring me home. Therefore, letters would not reach him, and now—why, he expects to come day by day and of course sends his notes to keep me from being distracted, as I would be otherwise. I will cease to speculate and go out in my rose garden and watch the sun's pathway through the Golden Gate as he bids good-bye to another day, which is just one nearer the time when I shall see my darling. Shall I never see him? Am I to live on and on with a message each day? Tender, loving ones they are, but I want to hold the hand that writes, I want to look in the dear eyes that have glanced over the written words. The foolish tears would not be stayed this morning when I read and knew he was not coming, instead he wrote:

"Heart of my heart, I fully expected to be with you last night, but matters shaped themselves so that it was impossible. My God, darling, I hope you, because of your own intense loneliness, can appreciate mine. In the still hours of night, in the visions of day, the fond recollections that none can steal from us—of a brief heaven—come up before me. How well I see and know the sweet face, the lovelit eyes, the beautiful mouth and the little dimple in the snowy chin; your lovely, perfect form in the springtime of youth and beauty, the idol of my heart whom I shall always love, fills me with pride. Then the futility of my efforts to come to you maddens me. God, how lonely I am without you! The hours are void of comfort, almost of rest, yet, my own, not for worlds would I have it changed, unless conditions were such that we be spared the pain of a day's separation.

"It is bitter, but there is a balm. Present circumstances destroy peace, but not the hope of the soul; tear down purpose, yet do not destroy hope; impede our meeting, but still encourage everything that makes life worth living. These are some of my rays of philosophy, but then I say, to destruction with philosophy, I want my beauty, my comfort, my star of hope, my Venus, more than anything else. Yet, dear little one, I feel the quality of love is tested by absence. It is no fleeting passion, no trifling fancy that awakes me from sleep by the very intensity of its yearning for the absent.

"No casual attachment breathes the loved one's name from the lips with the fervor of a prayer as regularly as nighttime closes the eyes and daylight opens them. I want you to feel that you are the sunlight of my life, my motive, my guide, my ambition. To you I shall come for companionship when I am sad and when I am happy. I shall turn from the world to you, for you are my world, and nothing shall interfere if human effort avails. I shall keep and hold you despite conditions. Sometimes I wonder if you realize or attach to our love the gravity that I do. I think you do, for I know your impressionable, loving nature,—know what my presence and caresses mean to you, and knowing this feel that even as it is we understand how more than fortunate we were in our accidental meeting on that blessed, memorable day when I

first saw my little girl in the abandonment of a fancied sorrow.

"Good night, my love, may your dreams be as tender as my anticipations of the near future. I am coming, sweet. There are invisible chords reaching out as from infinity binding my life to yours, drawing me irresistibly to you and home. Heaven keep you until we meet!"

The call of the birds came faint as the memory of a sound as I sat in the garden the following night. I had been restless all day, no letter or word of love or kindness had come. I watched and waited through every minute of the long hours that dragged along while my heart was sick with longings and dread. My eyes were blinded with tears and the constant watching for him whom my soul loved. What could it mean? Was our married life to be like this? If so, I would far rather die than live on in uncertainty. I could not endure the strain of the suspense of waiting. I was so lonely, and then came a torrent of tears that would not be stayed. My frame shook with a paroxysm of sobs, I wept as I had never wept before and until I was ill, and Mrs. Andrews coming out, finding me exhausted and shaken by sobs, took me in her arms and comforted me as no woman had ever done since I felt the shelter of my mother's arms.

"You must not grieve, my dear child. I think I understand, but you certainly know that you would not be left alone all this while without good and sufficient reasons." Then she talked in a soothing voice, cheering and consoling me, and added that I must not grieve, I would spoil my eyes; besides I was losing my color. What should she say? She would be sent away for not properly caring for me. This roused me immediately.

"I will not have it," I cried; "if you go, I will go, too. You are kinder to me than anyone has ever been—except somebody we both know"—and she smiled cheerfully.

"Now, you must brighten up and I will fetch you some tea out here. It will do you good."

After a while I heard her coming as I lay back with closed eyes, trying to steady my shaken nerves; then a hand was

placed over my eyes and a voice whispered: "Are you dreaming?" And then the dreams came true: "And the morning and the evening was the first day."

Truly, it was the first day—the day of days in my new home, when every hour was a string of pearls, white and beautiful, because we two wandered through the shaded paths, where wild roses grew, and the faint odors came from the wild grapevines among the hedges; gathering flowers, singing snatches of song, for I was so glad and light-hearted it seemed impossible that it was only yesterday I was so wretched. We would sit and look out over the dun-colored hills, now sun-kissed and brown, which extended for miles, girt in by trees showing dimly through a haze looking like old blue delft. Great round heaps of straw piled up after the threshing machine had sifted the wheat from the straw lay here and there with a circle ploughed around them for safety from fires. Certain little mounds and innumerable tiny lines crossing and running threadlike from the ditches to these stacks showed that the industrious ground-squirrels had improved the golden hours of the harvest time, and had been storing up the plump grains of wheat for their winter of content.

In the sultry heat of noon we rested, watching the herds grazing on the yellow stubble, while the saucy magpies chattered and quarreled over our intrusion. The upward rush of air, like the breath of an invisible presence, came in cool refreshing gusts from the depths far below us, palpable, changing odors came in little whiffs, different from the balsam of the pines,—it was the air from the ocean bearing with its salty freshness the mingled odors of the land and sea, penetrating the dim twilight of the forest, where the pale green leaves of the eucalyptus shimmered and glittered like jewels in the sun; the strong, pungent smell mixed with the aromatic breath of the pines went to the head, and I, drinking in the delicious nectar of love, was not troubling about future thirst or possible dregs. It was the day, the hour, the now of life, that sufficed for me then, and I simply reveled in the voices of the woods, the mingling of sounds of whirring insects and bird-notes with the soft, sweet undertone of the music of winds among the trees. All these with

an enveloping atmosphere of love made paradise here on earth seem not only a possible but a real thing. The demon of fear had no place in my thoughts during those happy hours. I was living one hour at a time. The untried future was far away, why think of it? The past, the present, eternity—why, I was living in all three as much as I ever should, possessing what I had, and safe in the arms of him I adored. There was nothing beyond, unless a new light might be added to my mental vision as the years unfolded.

We watched from our rose-garden the light grow dim until the land became but a reminiscence and the edges of the bay and the sky were welded in a cobalt vagueness. Above us were the star-girt silence of the heavens and the beautiful glittering embroidery of the myriads of stars in the "unpeopled spaces." How do we know they are unpeopled or void? We revel in fancies and talk of our love and I say that I am thinking of Merope, the lost Pleiad and I know too well that amid all the glory of the heavens I, too, would have cheerfully resigned that glittering field of beauty for the love of my heart. And he folding me to him, kissing and thanking me for the expression of my regard for him said:

"You would do all you say, resign heaven and earth for the sake of my love?"

"I would do so and more if it were possible. Your love is heaven itself to me. It may be that it is not wise to love you as I do, but better unwisely than never to have known what love means. You opened Pandora's box for me and love and hope—the purest and best gift of all the goddesses—came into my heart, blessing it, enriching it, giving it a domain, rich and fabulous, the kingdom of love, of sweetness, bathed in golden rays that gild the visionary hilltops which surround the fair kingdom wherein love palpitates in the air and whispers sweet suggestions to the amorous winds and a smiling, flame-winged Eros hovers over the fair land, a land which is mostly in silence, for the language of the soul is silence, heart to heart, and lips to lips, dear one, we are blessed indeed in our domain. We are more wise than Solomon, and richer than barbarian kings; for we possess the sacred fire that fills our hearts, love that completes unity, that

shall endure for all times, and I think shall burn brightly when yonder evening star shall have ceased to shine."

"My fanciful darling, I will tell you that I believe with you. I once thought I loved. It is the counterfeit that burns brightest; but a deep, true love is not for show; its flame may be dull, but its life is unchangeable. It burns like the lamps before the Holy of Holies—strong and steady, but never wavers or falters. Our love has blossomed into beauty, and its beauty will be lasting and eternal I trust. The time may come when you will doubt, for the serpent entered Eden, you know; but remember this, whatever fancies I may have had, whatever fetters may bind me, you are the one love of my life. Nothing can change or alter the fact that you have drawn a magic circle about me. I am lost in the maze of your witching charms from which I shall not try to extricate myself, because every fibre of my being responds to your tenderness and love; for love is always tender and the soul of the storms within me is quieted. I feel that though the whole world were to upbraid and abuse me, I would say only this, love is enough."

"Why do you speak so strangely? The whole world pleads for love, does it not?" I questioned. "Then how could it abuse you if we only are content? Is it not enough? I am indifferent; I care only for you. Let the world go by."

"Yes, but I love you so. I am proud of you. If I might, I would like to have half the world bowing at the feet of my queen. I would like it to adore you. I only wish I were like the genius of Greece who fashioned the Venus of Milo, that I might give to centuries unknown your perfect form, your beautiful features; or if I had the skill of Raphael, of Andrea del Sarto, then the whole world might realize something of your glorious hair, your eyes, lips and rose-tinted flesh, my Madonna, my angel," he said, as he looked at me, binding my heart a little closer by the magnetism of his gaze, until I lifted my lips to his, I was too happy to speak. Presently he went on:

"I care not for the future, whatever changes may come, whatever ills befall—barriers shall be broken. You are mine before heaven, and I will have and hold my own!"

He threw his head up, stood erect as if ready to combat unseen forces and his eyes had a look of stern defiance that made me shiver. I drew him down beside me and whispered in his ear:

"I care nothing for the world, its praise or adoration. The future is a blank and what matters it if I am never known to the world. It is only you I love and care for, not the careless eyes of the world. If I please you I am thankful, for, womanlike, I take delight in your admiration, and surely in this I may not be called vain. I want to appeal to all that is best in your nature. I want a place so deep within your heart that when time shall have stolen the rosetints from my cheeks, faded the gold from my hair and shriveled the flesh, you may still love me; may still care for the withered rose in the autumn and winter of life should we two be spared to test the rigors of age and the change which comes to all."

"Why should my love wane, dear?" he answered. "Will I not change even as you, and perhaps far more? I am many years older, and besides men are rarely, if ever sweetened by age. Women nearly always are, and if we are content to let the world go by, satisfied with each other, not caring to achieve much in life save this, to make each day a day of delight for ourselves, surely it would be sufficient—no chasing chimeras or trying for unattainable things. It is all very well to write, talk or preach of obstacles easily surmounted; that there are no summits one may not attain, nothing one may not achieve, which sounds well, but is for most mortals meaningless. How easily one may waste life trying to reach a far off Eiger or Matterhorn; but I think we two will send ambitions to the fickle winds and frolic over our own foothills, which lie at our threshold, desiring nothing beyond the scope of our vision—our world—the circle of each other's arms."

The days have passed quickly and the blank pages are staring reprovingly at me. I have not been so confidential lately. My life has been half in shade and half in sun. Nothing but brightness when my darling was with me and gloomy enough when he was not here. Very soon I became aware that the hardest thing to learn was to be patient when I was left alone. Try as I might I could not be patient or content.

But I soon realized that I must accept the inevitable with whatever grace I possibly could, especially when I learned that my love was worried, that something—I knew not what—fretted him and made him anxious, and the business which kept him away from me so much of the time grieved and worried him, so that he often looked quite pale and worn. I learned quickly to try to soothe and divert his mind rather than to fathom his cares. He said to me once in answer to a question:

"It is enough for me to endure the worry and fret of almost unbearable conditions. You, my frail little girl, can do nothing were I to tell you. I only ask you to love and cheer me when here. Your very presence is a balm, and I forget everything that is disturbing when you sing to me. I look to you for love and love only in this haven of rest,—here where we will not allow any of the cares or burdens of the busy old world beyond our hedges to enter into our peaceful Eden."

What woman so deeply in love as I, would not have been appeased and flattered. I was his love, his idol. Here he found the comfort and peace denied him elsewhere, and with a new blossoming joy in my heart I strove to be all he thought me, and though puzzled and perplexed over something that was inexplicable to me forbore to ask any questions.

I was not anxious to cross over to the great city beyond the bay. My wants were easily supplied nearer home; still I wondered why my dear one seemed to prefer that I should not come. Once he told me if I were to come he would have no time to see me, that he had no office of his own.

"Is that the reason you have never told me or allowed me to send you a tiny note?" I asked.

"Yes, I am the traveling member of a large firm; hence my necessary absence. You could never see me except by appointment, and when it is possible I will come to you, but you must strive to be content as possible. I am planning and some day we two will sail away to a distant fairyland on another journey and perhaps we will never return, never be separated all the rest of our days. Would that suit you?" he said. "Ah, you need not answer, your eyes have told me.

Do you know what wonderful tell-tales your eyes are? You could not keep a secret from me I am sure."

I laughed, I was so happy! "We will find out. You keep your secrets, perhaps I can mine also," I said teasingly.

"What do you mean?" he said almost fiercely.

"I'll tell you, tell you, some sweet day," I sang, and then I ran away and began to gather some roses, reaching up and endeavoring to catch a spray of passion-vine that had climbed to the top of one of the taller trees and was flaunting its gorgeous crimson blossoms far above the modest honeysuckle that twined itself about the arbor seat. I grew faint and dizzy, and feeling that I was falling, clutched at the swaying vine, which, tearing loose let me down easily but for a moment only, when I was snatched up and I felt my sweetheart's kisses upon my lips, while he chided me for being so careless.

"What is the matter, did you hurt yourself? Why, you are white, my darling," he said, as he carried me into the house and summoned Mrs. Andrews at once, doing all sorts of foolish impossible things.

"It is nothing," I said in answer to a look from Mrs. Andrews; "I was reaching for a blossom, that is all, and I fell. Don't scold me. I will be very good."

"I think you need it, but if you will promise to behave better in the future we may let you off this time."

There were no more questions about secrets, perhaps he wished to avoid the subject and the matter dropped. The days went by in endless procession it seemed. I simply lived my life without looking forward or backward. I loved and was beloved, and life seemed a pathway of roses, for I lived among them, and out beyond and over the hills and far away, my willing, eager feet went in quest of the blue lupins and larkspur and wild immortelles that were still beautiful in the lower levels and moist places. The poppies were thick among the grasses,—wide-eyed and bright they opened their hearts of gold when the sun's yellow disk appeared with glittering rays warm and bright, blessing every longing little sun-worshipper, veritable pagans, every one of them adoring the sun god with unabashed faces, though their little root-

fingers cling tenaciously and dig deep in the warm, moist soil of the dear earth mother.

The sweet summer days have been, taken all together, the dearest and sweetest I have ever known. Every day was so like the others that there has not been much to say to my journal. Love is enough, though summer is waning. Sweet resinous smells greet me now in my walks from the fields where grow the wild sunflowers, the golden rod and perishable blue flowers of the wild chiccory show that autumn is here. Overhead the trees stir in the breeze and the yellow leaves, the first harbingers of autumn's reaping, fall upon the table where we sit, in the dusky hour before the evening and the night kiss hands good bye, and the star sentinels come out one by one.

The breath of the vineyards, musky and odorous came to me from the over-burdened vines where-on grew the great bunches of purple and flame-colored grapes. A belated blackbird strutted proudly about the lawn regarding the arbor, the table and occupants sitting there with disdain. He looked like a minister with his hands under his coat-tails, looking at us with his supercilious yellow eyes, and showing his indifference to us and his audience of sparrows who are regular little bull-dogs in their battles. They were very shy of him. He knew his bill was sharper, he was bigger and blacker than the others and that accounted for much apparently in the seeming value he had of himself. A whirr of wings and the whistle of a night-hawk overhead made an instantaneous change—pride was in the dust—and he was gone, a black streak like a fleeting shadow, and the hedge only knew his safe retreat. On that one evening even the small details were engraven on memory's tablets never to be forgotten.

My darling and I sat under the trees long after the twilight deepened and the harvest moon, a great yellow globe, arose and showered the earth with a mellowing, softening radiance, driving away the dark shadows, burnishing the placid waters of the distant bay, and touching with a faint radiance the hills spread out before us. A soft, caressing breeze, freighted with a ripe, fruity fragrance, and the pungent smell of tarweed fanned our faces, bringing a peace that sank deep into our hearts and the day was ended—

nature's balm in the winds and nature's benediction in the filmy meshes of moonbeams filtering through the vines, and one last gleam caught from the smoldering fires in the western skies.

I remember some snatches of conversation as we sat there on that never-to-be-forgotten night. Once my sweetheart said:

"You cannot imagine the infinite rest and peace I find here with you in this dear little retreat of ours. I forget for a time the seething mass of humanity that is always over there," pointing to the lights of the distant city. "Even with the little of joy, there are hearts that are burdened, hearts that are never at peace, and then the sins that follow like sleuth-hounds through lives yearning perhaps for something different, yet bound by gyves unbreakable they go trammeled to the grave with unpardoned sins. They are bowed by teeming burdens of misery here, and go with no assurance of anything better beyond, knowing only the one indisputable fact that life is not worth the effort and that there is only death for recompense."

He seemed to be in a strange mood, as though he scarcely knew that he was speaking. I spoke to him and told him that he talked strangely.

"I do not know what you mean by sins and sleuth-hounds. You almost frighten me," and I crept closer to his side.

"Heaven grant you may never know, my dear one," he said. "Forget my wandering, spoken thoughts. The evening has cast a strange spell upon me. Our summer is gone. I know not what it has been to you, but there is enough of it left in my soul to eclipse the glory of all other summers known in my life, for there are memories which make it dearer, sweeter, fairer than any life has yet given me."

"If the months past have been dear to you in your busy life, how more than dear they have been to me. I could not tell you of the depths, the intensity of my love. I thought while you were speaking of the stars above us, and know that there are stars in the heavens bright as those we see tonight that are obscured by the dazzling rays of the sun which hide them from our vision, never to be seen except during an eclipse. So with my love. It burns brightly for you now,

and some day trouble and sorrow may darken your life, friends may desert you, the whole world fail you, then through the darkness you may understand what my love is, what it means for you and for me."

"Heart of my heart, I believe you and trust you utterly. If the test comes sooner or later you will not fail me, you will stay with me though all the world oppose."

"Safe in your love, the world is nothing to me," I replied.

And when we went indoors, a cricket upon the rug near the smoldering fire was singing his evening hymn, some tiny flames gleaming and flickering sent a rosy light over the hearth and tinged the walls. There was silence in the room except the shrilling noise from the senseless insect, and in the moment of my last waking thought, something seemed to whisper in my ear these words: "Love sacrifices all things to bless the thing it loves."

XIX

"Who cares for nothing, a king is he,
Sit down good fellow and drink with me."

I repeated the above lines to Fred and he replied:

"The sentiment is all right, but excuse me from complying with your request—if it means pulque. I have never in-

PIGSKINS FILLED WITH PULQUE.

dulged in swill, and think from the one taste I had of pulque it is a twin brother to bad buttermilk or whey. I have never been in favor of the whey habit. I can only solve the problem of the inordinate fondness for pulque by these people, that some of the beasts possessing the evil spirits which ran down into the sea were not all drowned and their appetites for the swill of old has been transmitted through several periods of re-incarnation."

"Don't be sarcastic. Take some tequila and cool your heated tongue," I said to him.

"Oh, no, I am having a lucid interval for the time being at least. Ask some of the chili-pod eaters to join you. They drink tequila and seem to relish it as I would a glass of iced milk if I could get it," he replied with a sigh. Then added: "I am rather considerate of my stomach and my conscience, both are so nearly alike that if one suffers the other feels the effect—both rebel after a thing is done, not before. Hence, I try to use judgment and save each one all I can, and my slumbers are always sweeter for the ounce of prevention."

"It is a good idea, Fred. But I was going to ask you to join me in a toast to your fair friend whom you painted. She looked beautiful enough last night for one to take some chances, so here's

> 'To a heavenly face in sweet repose,
> To the lily's snow and the blood of the rose!'

"Do you not think her slumberous eyes that have the splendor of the tropics in their depths, rather thrilling?"

"They certainly are beautiful," he replied.

> "Her large eyes wild with the fire of the south,
> And the dewy wine of her ripe warm mouth,"

I said teasingly.

Possibly you may think that Fred is getting somewhat interested from the foregoing, Jack, which I am writing along with the uneven thread of my discourse. And I am hoping that he as well as myself may return in a better condition mentally and physically. I have found our new friends charming and Fred has seemed quite interested in the beautiful girl who is rather inclined to make him think of her eyes, if I gather the meaning of her coquettish glances.

In all the diversity of life here I do not forget you, my patient friend. I love to think of you, and seem to hear you sigh when you receive one of my rambling messages. But I am pleased to think the sigh means that you wish you were with me. And I will do my best to let you see without other effort than reading a few of the things I am enjoying, while you are busy with schemes on hand to cinch the other fellow.

We have been on a short excursion out of the old city.

I was tired of the noisy streets. It was too much like home and I wanted to rest from the distorted idols in the museum, else I might in my desperation have become an image-breaker. My condition calls for one thing only and I spell it "idle," and so I found sweet solace in my sojourn.

It was a charming trip to Cuernavaca, about seventy-five miles from the City of Mexico. The road winds for some fifty miles up the mountains by a corkscrew grade until an altitude of ten thousand feet is reached. It was winter in the tropics, but the fruit trees were in bloom and fruits and flowers were for sale that grew on the hillsides. The scenery was grand, beggaring description. Unlike the Lady of Shalott I needed no magic mirror. My mirror was the car-window as we crept slowly along, and it needed no witchery, for there was magic in every bit of landscape and in every phase of life in this old New World.

One of the charms of Mexico is the absence of clothes and conventionalities, upon the heights where the natives live in cornstalk and grass-thatched mudhuts, shivering in the cold or sweltering in the heat. Their experiences of life, however hard or degrading, are matched by an indifference to it all, brought on by the germ-disease laziness, that is as old as their Aztec calendar stone. Their days are passed in blissful unconsciousness of their condition, knowing absolutely nothing except the life of their fathers, from the Western Noah, who built the Pyramids, down to the present life on the bleak, wind-swept mountain-ranges between Mexico City and the beautiful Cuernavaca plateau. Possessing a matchless vitality, they unconsciously cling to their customs, and eat their tortillas unleavened by ambition or discontent. Bless their tatters, they are indeed "glad rags," for they show through rents and wind-tossed shreds the polished mahogany and chocolate-colored limbs of the muchachos that would drive a sculptor wild.

Imagination is not racked and nourished in a sort of hot-house atmosphere. It needs no incentive. The life I saw was so real, so human that after all, it was in one sense unreal. They seem so replete with unwearied vitality, fresh and untrammeled as when the earth was young. They appear to enjoy their drama of life and I think they understand

the art of living, if there be not much of splendor in the setting, for there are no contrasts up there so near heaven, as down in the far-off city on the plain, of which they know nothing. Life is about the same for one and all, and here, surely ignorance is bliss, and so they live their brief hour, making the best of it in their dull, stoical way, which, after all, is the very best wisdom attained by mortals.

We slid down from the summit over a grade that for picturesqueness and beauty I have scarcely if ever, in all my wanderings, seen equaled. Through a blue mist I saw wonderful table-lands rimmed in by mountains. There were rivers and emerald lakes under a pure hyacinth sky, clear and bright except in the distance where great foamy masses of vapor were tossed and shattered against the far away peaks.

There were wonderful pictures in the mirage-haunted distances, exalting in their grandeur. A fellow-passenger who had seemed oblivious to his surroundings until we had left the summit and started for the down grade, came out upon the platform and stood beside me.

"Santa Maria, but it is glorious!" he exclaimed. He looked at me and pointed to the city of Cuernavaca, where it drowsed, half smothered in tropical vegetation.

"That is my home, life will be worth living now," he said.

He had been away from his loved home, and now that he was in sight of it once more he seemed transfigured. His homesickness fell away from him, all the pain and heartaches that had been evident in his expressive eyes were gone, and he might have been standing on some new Mount of Transfiguration, so marvelous was the change in him. His hungry eyes looked down on the plain where his heart was, and stranger that I was, I did not wonder that he loved his home.

From the weird cacti and the black lava beds, we went down into tropical verdure. There were great trees covered with bright blooming orchids, and others whereon were other gorgeous blossoms. I saw hibiscus trees that were more than a foot in diameter, immense poinsettias, and flowering bougainvilleas, besides many beautiful flowers unknown to me. Still lower and we were among the groves of bananas and the coffee plantations, and here I had my first real taste

of the tropics. There were white walls, red tiled roofs, vine-wreathed arches and crevices; trees with golden fruits, chirimoyas ("the fruit of the angels"), mangoes, guavas and bananas grew in abundance. I saw the usual throng of native Indians carrying water from the fountains in their pottery jars.

WATER-CARRIER, CUERNAVACA.

As I went through the streets I observed the projecting balconies from which fluttered bright-colored curtains. One involuntarily weaves romances and stories of soft music in the swooning balmy nights, of caballero and senorita, of moonlight and love. Old Castilian heroes and heroines haunt my dreams, as I sleep in a quaint room in the quaint old hotel with its arched portals and patios, where fragrant flowers bloom and the musical splashing of falling water from the vine-shrouded fountain lend a charm to my half-waking, half-dreaming hours. The whole plain about Cuernavaca is full of interest, and none the less so because it is hidden away from the beaten path of tourists, the majority of whom think the City of Mexico comprises about all of the republic worth seeing. Everywhere are Aztec ruins, and history is forced upon one at every turn.

Near here, a mile above sea-level, is a hill or pyramid built by human hands, nearly four hundred feet high and three miles in circumference. This was the Zochicalo, or House of Flowers, that was built in terraces like the pyramids of Sahara in Egypt. Some old Pagan rulers built, shaped and smoothed these terraces. Here, too, as elsewhere, are images

of birds, beasts and reptiles, carved by unknown hands with unknown implements. Here imagination cast off its fetters and reveled in the vague and unknown, in perhaps useless speculation over evidences of a race long gone. Here, as in so many parts of Southern Mexico, are remains of a past civilization that is a sealed book to us. We know that they lived and built their temples and vast pyramids, whose vastness rivals Egypt's famed wonders.

I thought of all the strange things in this new Old World, of the relics and ruins of a race blotted from the face of the earth, and accepted what I saw, for I do not care for theories and a searching for facts to suit them. These ruins are silent, and the mystery that enshrouds them made them all the more fascinating, possibly, to me. Still, one does not care for history for a continuous diet. It is good to live in the present a part of the time while traveling in the land of the Montezumas, and it was especially good to step across the street from the old hotel to a modern dining-room kept by a supposed American (a Mormon), who had very nearly what he advertised—"American cooking." Some fastidious travelers refused to go because it was said he had more than one Indian wife.

"If he had as many as Solomon and hasn't found out the futility of it, that is the place to go," I said, "for being the mixture he is, he will make them work."

And here I was wise, for the cooking was about the very best I found in all my travels. And in this country of snapshot marriages it was small concern of mine whether or not there were marriage certificates pinned to the doors of the apartments of the various girls who served us well and kindly at our meals.

I think often of my first experience in a large restaurant after my arrival in the sister republic. There was a clapping of hands, such as one hears at a political meeting when self-interested people applaud the speakers. I wondered why the guests were applauding the waiters, and wondered also if I should do the same. I did not think my waiter had done anything of extraordinary nature unless it was that he forgot, and only brought me two or three things out of half a dozen ordered. By dint of close observation I learned that when a

waiter was needed or when he had forgotten something, as Mexican waiters always do, the over-wearied and half-starved guest clapped his hands until the tomorrow-boy came.

Gray matter does not work in Mexico; on this side of the Rio Grande, it is simply a question of heels; brains are not racked here. I enjoyed watching the waiters run around like ants and about as aimlessly. It was a study—their waste of time and useless maneuvering. Dinner la comida was a comedy in three or four acts and a lottery also, for I drew a blank often, and a capital prize when I had my dinner served on the same day it was ordered.

The automatic system I once saw in Copenhagen would be of great benefit in Mexico, and in our own country for that matter, and would be especially suitable for our five-minute business men, yourself included, Jack, who cannot spare the time for a course dinner or a take-your-time-restaurant at noon. For the convenience and comfort of travelers, the Copenhagen automatic restaurants are perfect. One simply pulls a handle, drops a 10-öre coin, which is two and a half cents in our money, and gets a plate and a sandwich. There are walls of transparent glass with nickel pulls, one can see the various eatables, drinks and prices marked for each. The meal is easily selected. A little money and a strong pull are all that one needs. A table stands ready for the food. There are no delays, the food is good and hot, and there are no waiters to fee. This digression will prove to you that I am not traveling simply to eat, but after all I enjoy a good dinner as well as anyone whose stomach has not as yet been given over to hot water theories, and other fads.

I thoroughly enjoyed the old town with its palace where Cortez lived, and the splendid Borda Gardens that cost over a million dollars, which are perfect gems with their labyrinths of walks, terraces, slopes, lakes, statues and wealth of tropical vegetation reminding me somewhat of the Borghese gardens in Rome, only here the vines and trees are far more luxuriant and tropical than Italy ever knew. It was like wandering in fairyland, and in the vicinity also, among the coffee groves with the branches heavily laden with the vivid red berries, looking so bright amid the polished green leaves.

We visited the famous Barranca or gulch, a deep cleft filled with immense trees, ferns and other trees on the brink over which vines trail and hang like great ropes down the vertical walls. A beautiful cataract leaps by cascades down its mossy path. Here Cortez fought one of his battles. A passage was formed by the aid of trees and vines meeting over the chasm. The Indians were far more prosperous here than any we have so far seen. They raise corn, coffee and bananas, make pottery and seem to have sufficient for their needs.

FOUNTAIN UNDER THE MANGO TREES, CUERNAVACA, MEXICO.

There is more of coffee and less of pulque, less begging, for they are not tourist-spoiled yet, but are dignified and pleasant to deal with.

How vividly I remember one evening spent in the palace gardens in the dusk under the tropical skies. Looking skyward, strange constellations loomed up, burning brightly and intensely in the southern skies. A tender strain of music came to me, filling the odorous air about me, hovering over the deeply-worn streets and garden, a-tangle with mosses and riotous vines. Was it an echo of bygone years—the wail of some old Aztec crying out in the dim twilight, with tremulous,

sobbing moans filled with pathos and pain? A remembrance of something lost seemed to be in the notes that thrilled and died away in the hushed twilight. The sound was strangely real and human, but it was only a mocking-bird singing out its heart-broken notes amid the orchid-laden trees.

Later on with the witchery of the night about us we paused for a moment before the old gray palace, then went on with the bird notes still throbbing in my ears. We passed a house through whose heavily-barred windows came the sound of music. It was "La Golondriana" the "Home, Sweet Home" of the Mexicans, that touches, stirs, and melts them, whether heard in the casa grande, the adobe, or mud-hut thatched with palm leaves, or thrummed on guitars or improvised harps, out in the twilight air. The melody wherever heard touches the soul of these music-loving people.

Glancing in as we passed the window I saw a girlish figure clothed in white, with great masses of dark hair rolled back from her face, with one single flower, a bright red hibiscus, placed low down among the coils of her hair. Looking more closely, I saw standing beside her the homesick traveler whose face was radiant with love and happiness. Mixed and interwoven with the singer's voice came again the bird notes, rippling and thrilling with tenderness and sweetness from among the mango trees. So I last heard them, so they will sing for aye, amid the bloom and fragrance of restful, peaceful nights. Here, as elsewhere in the world, love holds sway, and "Home Sweet Home" in any country is home indeed if only love be there.

Glancing at Fred I saw he was very pale, and a pang for him smote my heart. I thought he had given his love "for a beautiful bright and delusive lie," and my sympathy goes out to him far more than I could tell him. That last evening I dream of even now. I hear again the music, the splash of fountains; the fragrance from the hearts of flowers, more gorgeous than California has ever known comes with the dreams, and I feel that no recollections of Mexico can ever be as sweet to me as were the few blessed days and entrancing nights in Cuernavaca. FRANK.

XX

"And fidelity, however wide the severance, makes in God's sight, a marriage-tie holier, holier than any man can forge, and one which no human laws can sever."

Alice Writes

I must try to think, my dear journal, try to tell you that it is another person who must continue writing, because I have no one else to talk to as I can to you. The tears fall and you do not care if the white pages are blotted and stained with tears. So has my life, my soul, been dimmed with tears that fell, as unavailing prayers went up while my throat choked with the thought that seared my soul,—that I have laughed and sung through all the bright summer in the very exuberance of living and loving and now I feel that "Life is a lie and love is a cheat"; and I sit cowering in fear, groping and wondering why God lets me suffer; why, I seem to be lost amid a whole world of people who are stronger than I, who would know what to do.

I have no one to tell me, no one in all the world of women, to whom I can go for one comforting word, one little word of love. And I know too well that I cannot cheat myself with the comforting thought that love can be forgotten. Whoever said "Loving is not living," never loved, never knew the depths, the fever that burns, or the cold that pierces the heart and abides there. Yet I must wait a little while, and tell it right if I can.

If I remember, it was the next morning, one I had looked forward to with so much joy, for we two were to have one whole blissful day wandering over the hills. How my heart throbbed for joy. I was out of doors in the early morning, which was fair enough to tempt the world of people who live in doors. We were waiting for breakfast to be prepared when a thought came to my mind. I had intended asking my sweetheart before, but was rather shy, now I felt I could wait no longer, and the morning seemed as if my wish might be made possible.

"Darling, I have wanted you to do something for me for quite a long time, but you have been so very busy all the summer, and now we might do it very soon, even today," and I looked up at him as if the wish was already granted.

"What is it, my angel? Surely nothing very hard for me to do with your help."

"Well, you know that I am eighteen and over, do you not?"

"Certainly, I haven't forgotten your birthday, and our tender love on that memorable day made a little more sacred than before because of renewed assurances of our undying love for each other."

"Well, being of age, I want you to take me to see Mr. and Mrs. Browning. Wait," I said, as he started up as if he was going to leave, "hear me; you must take me. It is only right that we should go once."

"Go once. But why, in God's name, why?" he repeated.

"Because I wish it. They know we are married. I wrote them and I only want to go just once. It is right, I think. They are old, and I would like them to see us, to know how happy we are, and I want to say something to Mrs. Browning. Then I really will not ask to go again, if you do not wish it," I hurried on without glancing up until then, and the look on his face struck terror to my heart. "Oh, what is it, what have I said?" I cried, for he looked like death.

"You wrote to them?" he said, slowly as if it was almost impossible for him to speak. "When did you write?"

"Before I left for Alaska. I thought it right to do so, and I told them I was married to a good man, and safe within the arms of my husband; that I was sorry I could not go with Jane as they had planned, and though I knew nothing of the world, I had married you and was very, very happy; that I desired they would not interfere, but that I hoped to come some day and let them see I had made no mistake, and be forgiven."

"But they knew," he began.

"Oh, how kind of you; why did you not tell me before that you had written them?" I cried, but he interrupted me with a gesture.

"Alice, how dared you write," he said, so sternly that I trembled so I could not stand. I sank down on the seat shivering with dread of something, I knew not what.

"I wrote because I thought if they knew I was married they would probably not care so much where I was, and I told them I was safe." I was choking with sobs and tears, but he did not take me in his arms as he had done before.

"And what name did you sign to that one or other letters?" he said in a strange tone.

"I have only written the one, and signed my own name, Alice Bertram, the first and last time I have had the pleasure," and again I choked.

He turned and walked down the path, and it seemed as if I heard him groan. What had I done? Oh! what was the mystery? Why should we be so miserable when I was so proud of my home and our own dear love?

After a moment he returned and seating himself beside me, took me in his arms, soothed and quieted me, then said: "Alice, I want you to be a brave little woman. I want to talk to you; there are some things that you seemingly do not understand. I know you are ignorant of the ways of the world, a mere child in ignorance, because of your isolation. I have studied over the matter deeply and wondered if you thought all this while that we were really married."

"Really married! Why, it could not be anything else, could it?" I smiled now, and settled back in his arms again. Then he continued:

"Of course I am yours, and you belong to me by the divine right of love; for I love you so deeply, so desperately that I have defied the world, the laws, and all the rights civilization imposes upon mortals. But, dear one, we are not husband and wife legally. You certainly know that we could not have been legally married on that first night in San Francisco."

"Not married?" the whole world seemed to be growing dark and strange. "I do not understand, of course the excitement and the wine you gave me dazed me, made me forget everything almost until the next morning when I awoke in a strange room, sick and dizzy, then Mrs. Andrews came in and called me 'madam,' and said my husband would return

soon. Why did she say that, and why did you tell her I was your wife if it was a lie?" Something was pulling at my heart, and my head seemed bursting.

"Oh, do not torment me, I could not live if I thought it were true, the shame, the horror of it;—a lie, living a lie all these months, and I looked upon you, trusted you as I do my Creator. Do not be cruel, I—I cannot endure much more. See how weak I am, how my hands tremble."

"Alice, my darling, won't you try to be brave for my sake, and listen? My beloved, my own, God help me, I thought you knew, but were sweet and kind enough to carry out the pretty farce when you called me husband, and let me tell you that I am, before God, who knows our hearts. I could not do other than I did at the time and avoid scandal, and later I felt that it was best to send you away; that by so doing, I might break the spell for both of us. But I could not remain away—the overwhelming desire for your presence was so great I was powerless to resist. It is worth a lifetime of sorrow and despair, this past summer, but I cannot and will not give you up. Still, I cannot be more to you than I am now, for another woman bears my name, and it is not the name you know me by."

I groped my way blindly from those arms that had been so dear that heaven itself was not needed.

"Merciful God!" I moaned, "I know now what it means. The truth has been forced upon me." I threw out my hands trying to reach something real and tangible, and then the blackness of death struck me, and I knew no more.

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It was not until I was convalescent that I learned that I had lain for weeks raving in delirium, and it was still longer before I recovered. In my delirium it seemed that one figure was ever present, and I knew that it was my mother. At times she seemed in some peculiar way to be enduring the same agony I felt. I in some way realized that she, too, knew all the horror and desolation that racked my soul, that she felt and understood, for I could see her writhe as if in pain, and hear her moan; but ever as I strove to comfort and console her, some invisible power pulled me back, back into a

region where unnamable shadowy forms taunted, jeered and beckoned me with uncanny hands until I would cry and cower with dread.

And then there would be a sudden change again, and a strange peace would fill my soul, for I would see my mother bending over me as she did when I was a child. I could feel her soft hand soothing in its touch as she stroked my hair, and spoke softly and tenderly as of old, when I used to waken in the darkness from some horrid dream, crying aloud for her, my only comforter.

After an eternity of agony and dread, another form took her place. I knew in a vague, uncertain way that my husband's hand was upon my brow. I heard, as if in dreams, his dear voice thrilling me as he entreated me to listen to him, to love, to forgive; but when I awoke to consciousness, no one but a nurse and the doctor came near me, and in the long days when reason was trying to gain ascendency over the vagaries of the brain I could only gather up the threads one by one.

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At last one day I was allowed to read a message. How my heart throbbed when I saw the well-known writing!

"My own! My whole desire! My treasure! Listen to me, my heart's best and only love: While you have been ill, and I on the verge of madness, I remembered the words Pilate gave to the Pharisees, 'Go guard it as you know,' and I shall guard it as I know, as only I of all the world know, and can guard you, my treasure-trove, my own; for I shall watch over you, shall keep you safe from the world. In my heart you have an abiding place; none shall ever hurt or displace you, but safe within my arms you shall rest, until the time comes when as of old, an angel shall come and break the seal and we two shall know no more of earth, of night, of sorrow, but a heaven of eternal love together.

"I am so lonely without you, my star that brightens the darkness of my night of sorrows. My every breath all these weeks when you were ill has been a voiceless prayer for you first, and for strength to help me in this time of need. I was with you during your hours of unconsciousness, and I felt

humbled to the dust. I know in my inmost heart the brute that I am, and yet so far as I am concerned, I cannot bring myself to regret it. I have given my life for a great love; it is yours, and will be always. I have known the heights and the depths, too, of love and despair. No, not despair, for while I have your love,—and surely the wand of pity will strike your heart, if it has not already, and you will pity rather than condemn. He who loves much will forgive much, and surely you will forgive, for if I have wronged you I have loved you. I have loved you, heaven knows how deeply and fondly. 'The sinless are those who never saw the face of temptation,' and in my deception wherein lies my sin against you, remember it was because of my love that was stronger than I, who was powerless to resist. Oh, child of my heart! you wound yourself about the very fibres of my being, there you will abide until I have reached that vast sea of God's eternal rest.

"I have been in the depths; I know what Gethsemane means. I have struggled beneath my olives, and know what the hemlock in my life means. In the greatness of your love ponder over these words, but do not cast me from you. I cannot, will not, live shut out from the blessing of your presence. I shall send you a message each day until I am allowed to see you. May it be soon, dear. Let me hear through the physician when I may come."

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"Only the tempted know what temptation is," and though I had thought I would never see him again, though my whole nature cried out against the deception practiced, yet my love was stronger than I, and again the words came to me now with a new and subtle meaning, "Love sacrifices all for the thing it loves."

How could I forget, or live without him, and yet, another woman perhaps loved him, too. Yet he loves me and will not give me up; I think I would not care so much if he did not love me. I think I should hate him if I thought he loved another. But loving me why should I care for anything else in the world. I only yearn, ah, I knew it, deep down in my soul, for sweet forgetfulness in his arms. I wanted no remem-

brances of the dead days and drear nights that had sapped my strength, almost my life, during these weeks of illness. I only wanted them folded up and put away like a book once read and forgotten.

I only wanted one word that was written in glittering letters upon my heart to remain, the word—"LOVE!" For it was love I knew too well that bound our hearts in indissoluble union. Then I would reason until my brain reeled, trying to plan or think of the future without my love was as yet impossible in my dazed and weak condition. Suffering had not made me wiser or stronger. I could only sit and drift back to the days before my illness and try to cheat myself that it was only one of the vagaries of my brain, that it was only another dreadful dream.

When I was able to sit up, another letter was given me. I said to myself, I will not read it, yet knowing all the while I could not resist the pleadings of love. I hungered with all the intensity of a starved being for food to sustain life. I was not strong enough to refuse and I knew I was holding out my hands as I used to do to my mother; that I must feel his arms about me once more before death claimed me.

"My little darling," the letter began, for I could not long resist the message, his eyes seemed to look at me and entreat me to read his thoughts, "now that I learn my poor tender love is improving a little, may I not plead for an hour or even a few moments that my eyes may see you once more, for my whole heart goes out to you, and I would give my life, yes, over again could I have spared you the suffering you have undergone. I should never have remained away a moment, no matter what the consequences, but I was assured that the only hope for you was absolute quiet with nothing to remind you of the cause of your illness. May I not try to soften your heart?" (Ah, he did not know how soft and weak a heart I had.) "I want to try to excuse myself to make you more lenient if possible before you say the word 'come,' for you will and soon, my darling, my only hope.

"You came into my life at a moment when I was least capable of resisting the temptation of amusing myself with your pretty, girlish ways that were new to me. Your utter ignorance of the world and your beauty fascinated me, for

you were unlike anyone I had ever known, and again your very loneliness appealed to all that was best in me. I felt that I must try to divert your mind. I wanted you to feel there was some one interested in you, who cared for you, and I thought, God help me, that I could give you some new ideas, some hope of a change with kind friends to cheer you, for even from the first meeting I seemed to read your heart. I could see the yearning for love and companionship in your dear eyes.

"The idea of your going away as you threatened, and I believed you ignorant and wilful enough, was not to be thought of for a moment. You knew nothing of the world and its cruelty, for you were only a child who had never come in contact with the world at large and knew less than many a girl of ten years allowed the freedom of the streets and public schools. Realizing fully your peril, I felt it my duty to try to save you from folly and regret.

"Then we were thrown together, and in trying to formulate a plan whereby you might be reconciled to remain at home, I saw you every day, talked with you, learned more and more how innocent of the ways and wiles of men you were. First you interested and amused me, and each day I found I was eager to meet you. I loved to see your eyes light up with pleasure when I came, your telltale blushes told me more than you were aware of. Your naive way of expressing your thoughts, your perfect frankness in manner and speech, and your too evident happiness in my society flattered me—man of the world as I am—for men are far more susceptible to flattery than most people suppose, and I am no exception.

"Unconsciously you drew me to you. You were lonely and craved companionship, and I could not withstand your tears. You wound yourself about my heart before I knew or realized it, and when I found that I was powerless to resist the mad infatuation that possessed me, and that I was desperately and hopelessly in love with you, I flung reason to the winds and abandoned myself to the madness of the hour. But I did not dream of anything serious so far as you were concerned, and not for one moment did I harbor an evil thought or think of any undesirable consequences, until caught in the storm center of passion, I allowed myself and you to be whirled on

in its narrowing circles of sweetness and power until reason, sense and judgment fled, and the circle narrowed until the world and its obligations were forgotten.

"There were only we two, the elemental male and female, adrift on a sea of passion, powerless yet willing voyagers, forgetting all save each other, and not caring whither we were carried. Strange how soon reason and regret, unwelcome visitors, return when the storm of passion is passed. Why does not conscience assert herself before a deed is committed? It is like a sluggish snake, peaceful and quiet until something happens to arouse it, then there is danger. So with conscience when it is too late; it begins to uncoil and strikes with relentless fury, and oh, the pangs of its hurt. A little activity on its part before the deed is accomplished might save a world of agony and pain, but, alas, it is always a little too late, and seldom makes itself known until the thing for which it accuses one, is accomplished, and then what is the good?

"But conscience can never control love, for there is nothing stronger in the world than love, and nothing weaker, it seems; for in my love for you I am weak and helpless, an arrant coward, and though I fought and struggled at first, I am now the most willing of captives. I shall serve you whether you will or not all my life, and all of it shall be devoted to you and shall be spent in the endeavor to make up for my deception, for, my darling, I was selfish and felt that you must be mine at any cost.

"There was nothing else for you or for me in the world, I firmly believed. For I knew you loved me with that first kiss, but even then I had not forgotten my duty to the woman who bore my name, and I had no thought of casting a shadow on your young life. I did not realize or think of the subtle influence of your presence or of the danger point where temptation and desire sets in until it was too late. The drifting with the tide is so easy when one's wishes go in the same direction. So I found it, and so was caught in the current all unexpectedly that day I came across you, and you in your fear of your traveling Nemesis begged me to save you from her.

"O child, child, with the passionate soul of a woman, looking at me with your eager, pleading eyes, I could not tear myself away from their magnetic influence. The rapture

of having you with me, of saving you perhaps from a life of which you knew nothing, where amid the vapors of sin and shame you would suffer and be smothered in an atmosphere laden with the sighs and moans of lost souls, predominated. A protecting tenderness was my first emotion for you, and with the love which grew stronger and which overpowered me I felt I must save you from yourself,—you, in all your fresh young beauty adrift in the cold, cruel world! I did not forget my duty to my wife, but, reason as I would, it did not seem that I was called upon to sacrifice my life and yours, to put aside our dear love with all its warmth and delight for an abstract or senseless idea of duty. I might have put you and the heaven of my life from me, but what would I have left for her whom I once thought I loved. Without you all the dreams, the hopes and desires that make the poetry of life and living here on earth desirable would be shut away from my soul. It would not be in accord with nature's plans, for it would seem useless and unnatural, when deep in my soul I knew there could never be anything left for Ruth, my wife, save a cold and chilling sense of duty; when with you every want of my nature was satisfied and has been from the first, when I found I was in the depths of an overpowering and absorbing love from which I know now there can be no escape.

"Love, such as is in our hearts, means but one thing, and that is union—marriage—just as incompatibility means separation or divorce, and scarcely was I married, according to the law, before I knew too well that we were as widely separated so far as concerned our bodies and souls which did not respond to the alchemy of love wherein lies real marriage. Dear one, shall we refuse the cup of nectar that will be ours, always full and running over, that fate holds in readiness for us, because of the man-made laws of the world wherein we happen to live? In other localities our love, our union would not only be justified but deemed a religious duty. There are other lands, other cities of which you have read, and doubtless dreamed, where we can go and create a home for ourselves, where we can live in peace all our lives.

"I have not told you, but I am wealthy, and we can go wherever we wish, and no one can hinder or control our

actions. We will plan everything to your liking when you are well enough. All I ask now, is that you will let me come to you, my joy, my comfort. Let me know that you still love me. You are sweet and charitable, and I will come to you a supplicant, poorer than charity itself.

"Hoping, praying, that out of the greatness of the love you had for me, you will not deny me a pittance of that, I hope, which must still lie within the depths of your soul. My angel, be pitiful, be merciful, give me the heaven of your love, the only heaven I crave."

XXI

"And ye are fleeting, all vainly I strive
Beauties like thine to portray;
Forth from my pencil the bright picture starts
And—ye have faded away."

I am leaving the old city again for a visit southward, friend Jack, and am going to prowl among pyramids and old ruins alone. Fred does not seem interested in these things, but will go East to Jalapa and Vera Cruz with me when I return. He has met some charming people. The fair senorita of whom I wrote, seems to claim a good portion of his time and there are several families, American and English also, we have met who are hospitable and altogether charming.

We have had some delightful drives on the paseo and on to Chapultepec, the fashionable drive, and at the proper hour, from four to seven o'clock in the afternoon. We have seen something of the private life of the exclusive wealthy people here, and it has been pleasant, but you know, my dear fellow, I am not searching for life of that kind, in fact, I am rather anxious to avoid it. So now I shall send you an account of my last excursion.

Early one morning I found my way to the ticket office—despachio de boletas—at San Lazare station, and in a smoke-filled eating room made an attempt at breakfast. The coffee was thick and black, the bread hard and sour. The eggs had been laid by a triste hen, or perhaps she had been raised near the Viga Canal. But I am not living to eat in Mexico, and to do the country justice, will say that eggs as a rule are about the best staple found down below the Tropic of Cancer, and one can generally rely upon them.

I soon forgot about the breakfast when we left the City of Mexico and started for Puebla, as our train moved along the ancient causeway that once was a road between the capital of the Montezumas and the great city of the Tuxucans. On either side of the track are trees which shade the avenue, their boughs meeting overhead. This beautiful road skirts the

Viga for some miles, from which extends the recently finished and successful drainage canal that runs some thirty miles through the valley, through a tunnel seven miles long, draining the valley of Mexico into the ravine of Teginzgniac.

Lake Tezcuco, a blue shimmering sheet of water, lies on the left, and in the marshes of Chalco are thousands of wild ducks which seem immune from the hunter. Farther on we came to fertile plains. Picturesque churches, villages and haciendas dot the landscape. There are aqueducts and Aztec

MAGUEY PLANT AND SAP-GATHERER.

ruins, and in the distance are the Pyramids of the Sun and the Moon, older than Cheops, perhaps.

We entered the great pulque regions at Irola. The country for the most part is used principally for the cultivation of the maguey plant, from which is made the pulque, the curse of the country, and other intoxicating drinks. The maguey, or, as we know it, the century plant, starts to bloom in about four or five years after planting, in some parts of Mexico. The stem is cut out before it grows very high, and in the reservoir thus formed at the base of the great leaves the sap is collected. A good plant will often yield one hundred and fifty gallons before it dies. Even then the plant does duty, for

ropes are made from the fibre of the leaves, huts are thatched with them, the heart or root is roasted and eaten. It burns readily, green or dry. Mescal and the fiery tequila are made by distillation,—agua miel (honey-water) they call the sap when first drawn from the plant by the sap-gatherers.

They take long gourds, pierce each end, and putting one end in the reservoir they suck the air from the gourd, which then fills with the juice. This is emptied into pig-skins or other receptacles and in twenty-four hours ferments. It is then the dearly beloved pulque, which will not keep, and is the one thing that is an exempt from the rule of delay. There are no mañanas for pulque. Give us this day our daily pulque, is about all the average Indian asks. And when I realize that one hundred thousand pints of the soured juice is consumed daily in the City of Mexico, it must be a question of ask and you shall receive. One wonders how changed conditions might be if the vast acreage, the miles and miles of maguey fields were used for growing cotton, corn and beans; but in this country pulque is a necessity, and the necessities of life they must have, the luxuries they can do without.

I did not need a dream, like Fra Julian Garces, to know that the location of Puebla was beautiful, and I looked upon it not with dreaming or rested vision, but tired, worn with travel in the uncomfortable cars, stifled with tobacco smoke that filled the car, for everybody smoked. There are only two places in Mexico, it is said, where smoking is not allowed —the churches and Pullman cars. I know not if there are any perambulating churches for the convenience of the traveler, but do know that there are but few Pullman cars off the main lines, so traveling is simply a matter of endurance. I was hungry and weary, but appreciative, when I saw the beautiful plain between the slopes of the great volcanos, with its wealth of trees, green fields and sparkling waters, dominated and guarded by Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl, while in the near distance Orizaba nodded approval with his hoary head. The scene would be fair enough were there no city, but is enhanced by the domes and towers of the churches, standing in groups and in pairs and alone, towering in gay colors—yellow, red, blue and brown—a shadowy resemblance of Moscow, with the star and crescent lacking.

It was not Puebla, particularly, that I cared for. The Pyramids of Cholula, eight miles distant, were of far more interest to me. Their origin is unknown. When the Aztecs came in the eleventh century, the great pyramid was here, and a legend that had come down to the dwellers of the region was told them of its builders—that they were giants, who had descended from a Western Noah, the whereabouts of whose ark was unknown. The legend runs, that having displeased their gods, they left their pyramids unfinished, which is of

PYRAMID OF CHOLULA.

small concern to me. But the great pyramid and smaller ones are here now, and covered, except in some places, with soil, the accumulation of the dust of centuries. Immense trees grow thereon, and send down roots among the masonry, disintegrating the slabs of sun-baked brick and mortar.

The great temple of Quetzalcohuatl, the mystic "God of the Air," is gone. There is no trace of the magnificent ebon image, jewel-bedecked, and resplendent with gold and emblematic shields, the symbol of his power over the winds.

Cholula was to the ancients what Jerusalem is and was to the pilgrims—the Mecca for the tribes—even as the Mohammedans of today make their yearly pilgrimages. They came

ages ago from the four quarters of the land, hundreds of miles, to bow down and worship his ebon highness.

I went up the roughly paved road of the large pyramid, which is only one hundred and seventy feet high, yet its base lines are twice as long as those of Cheops, in Egypt, and it covers twenty acres of the plain. The roadway leads by easy gradations to the summit. Beautiful trees and a tangle of undergrowth covers the whole surface, which looks more like a mound than a pyramid. I entered an arched entrance and saw the church, Nuestra Senora de los Remedios, built where the pagan temple once stood. I looked over the beautiful valley and saw the river Atoyac and the Puente de Dios (Bridge of God), the fair city of Puebla in the distance, and the historical hill of the Guadalupe, where the French were repulsed in 1862, and also in the later battle in 1867, where, by the capture of the French army, Maximilian's doom was sealed.

What memories cluster about this region. I thought of the pomp and ceremony of the rites of worship of the old pagans upon this summit; of their sanguinary worship and strange customs. They tore the hearts from living, palpitating bodies, which they offered in sacrifice. Cortez the Conqueror, massacred the Cholulans, and afterwards to show what manner of men he and his followers were, cut off the hands of captives. Of the methods of pagan and Christian I have nothing to say. I only know that now the dust is silent beneath my feet that once stirred with life; that the race long passed away once built and fashioned this mound. A disciplined and populous people heaped, with long toil, this great pile of earth and stones for the abode of their god, while in Athens the Greek "was hewing the Pentelican to forms of symmetry, and rearing on its rock the glittering Parthenon."

The sound of battle died long ages ago. The shield of tortoise shell, gold-mounted, is gone, so are the flint-pointed clubs and the slings. The sound of the war drums and the blast of sea-shells and royal horn that used to echo from these pagan teocallis are heard no more, as are gone the dread echoes of later wars.

I saw below me the Cholula of today, the city which showed at the invasion greater wealth and higher attainments in architectural skill than any other place that Cortez and his

army had seen. It now has a population of five thousand poverty-stricken people, dirty and filthy, yet rich in the matter of churches, for I counted twenty-eight in the village that lies around the base of the pyramid. From the crumbling sides of a smaller pyramid we dug strange bits of carving and odd pieces of stone figures, animals and reptiles, of crude pottery and some arrow-heads of obsidian.

Puebla! Popocatepetl! Ixtaccihuatl! with the golden glow behind them; Malintzi in the foreground, while far through the immensities of air eastward a bent and crooked

STREET SCENE IN CHOLULA.

moon cast a faint light on the eternal snows of Orizaba. Through the haze I see three distinct shades, emerald, purple, and white, emblematic of the three ages of man; the green meaning hope and youth; purple, the richness of manhood, and white, cold and dreary, age and the end. Well, I am not in too great a hurry to reach the last stage; in fact, I have scarcely yet begun to enjoy the purple and gold of manhood, and I hope to wrap the royal colors about me and retain them for many years to come.

And so I mused, looking from the foot of the great pyramid, basking in an atmosphere fraught with the fragrance of

semi-tropical plants and flowers, while the light faded and the ridges gleamed ghost-like through the deepening shades, and far above in the luminous haze of pink-tinged masses of vapor huddled against a stationary wedge was old Popocatepetl, shining white and stern in silent majesty, with the lesser peaks, guarding Cholula and her pyramids. Looking on these same pyramids, I wondered gravely upon the strangeness of the various forms of worship that we know have existed in bygone ages. The Mexicans worshipped Quetzalcohuatl, born of a virgin ages before America was thought of. They had their legends of the flood of Noah and the Ark, as is evidenced in the ruins at Cuernavaca; their belief in a Savior antedates ours, as was the belief of the Egyptians in Horus, their Savior, born six thousand years ago. Buddha, born of a virgin, came to redeem the world five centuries before the wise men followed the star and found a babe at Bethlehem.

The Hindoos worshipped their virgin-born redeemer, Krishna. His miracles were told and he was called the Life, the Good Shepherd, etc., the same legends, the same belief pointing to a common origin—to a universal foundation—the worship of some supreme being or creative power, as is shown by their worship elsewhere, and especially here in Mexico in the worship of the God of Air, God of Water, and God of Fire. In all their grotesque idols, and their lust for blood, there was an evidence of doing something to appease and propitiate their gods. So, my dear friend Jack, it seems that morality and religion are purely relative terms after all is summed up. That which is highly improper at one time, may be both proper and religious at another. The virtue of yesterday is the sin of today, as is patent to us, for sex-worship or phallicism, the proper and religious spirit in times gone by, would be called a sin and would horrify, if one discussed the rites in a civilized community today. I will leave these matters for abler heads, and will not bore you in your prosaic office with what will probably seem absurd ideas to you. But if you were here I think the strange mysticism of the place would leave its impressions upon your sordid soul, for with the rush and roar of a very material world about you, I know that within the inner man there is a spirit which would respond

to the unknown history and mystery of a people who were here before Calvary echoed the words, "It is finished."

Night came before I was ready to leave, and as I looked up to the church towers, so far above the gloom and dust of the street, a rose-red sky tinged the church that now stands where the temple once stood, upon the summit of the mound, which once flashed its light from never-dying fires over the city below. A single light struck my vision from the heights above. It was easy in that glow to imagine the sumptuous pagan temple, with its fires forever bright on that great pile above me, with its terraces and truncated surfaces. Cortez and his successors ravished and devastated the public edifices and splendid structures here and elsewhere, even as the Copts hacked and mutilated all of the best in Egypt's temples, and one cannot forgive the fanatical zeal of the conquerors who destroyed invaluable records of the history and nationality of the conquered, but these pyramids,

> "They stand between the mountains and the sea—
> Awful memories; but of whom we know not."

Night closed in about us before the last mule car from Puebla came to take us back,—eight miles and dinner at the other end of the line from us. We were a weary and hungry party. The air was foul on the inside of the cars from smoke and odors not of Araby, the blest, but from the crowd of unwashed natives. Outside the winds were cold and chilly. It was pneumonia-invoking weather, so I could not stay on the platform. "Suffer and be strong," some sentimental weakling who had not an idea of what it meant, wrote once upon a time. I was suffering and not growing any stronger, unless it was in the desire to use stronger language than was permissible. I spoke to a gentleman of the party and said, "Why don't you say things? You look them."

"I know nothing that will express my feelings in words," was the reply.

Just then the car stopped, for no reason we could understand, and the minutes dragged wearily. The gentleman tried in his best newly-acquired Spanish to find out why we were delayed. Again language failed, for these people who move in a mysterious way, their journeys to perform, were

not communicative to the Gringo. We thought of bandits, and all sorts of horrible things out there in the black night, but at last a shrill sound from a horn—all drivers carry one—announced the fact that we were to move on. On we went, and at last reached Puebla.

We rushed out and saw only one carriage, which several natives tried in vain to enter, but they were thrust aside by a muffled figure at the door. He saw my traveling companion and me and pointed to the carriage. This struck me as rather strange, and I remarked, "He is shrewd and knows he will get more money from us than from the natives." He jumped up and sat by the muffled driver, and we were driven rapidly through unknown streets. I thought of sudden disappearances, stilletos and detective stories came to my mind. There was something mysterious in our being whisked off in this manner. Suddenly we turned into a well-lighted street and drew up in front of a hotel I had not seen. A form glided out from the doorway and talked in a low tone to the men on the seat. One finally got down and handed me a letter. I was doubly astonished to read my name. "The plot thickens," I said. "We will be locked up for unearthing a few bits of useless pottery." Then I read: "Senor there are two Gran Hotels in Puebla. This one is where you are at. Your baggage is here and here you did ate."

I was still mystified, for to my certain knowledge I was not at any hotel just then, and still more certain that I was not going to stop at this unknown "Gran" Hotel. There was nothing for us to do it seemed, for after giving me the letter we were ignored. But there were more curious gesticulations for a time, then away we went again, through more dark streets. Not long were we in suspense, however, for with a flourish the carriage drew up in front of the hotel I had left at noon, and the mystery was solved. When we failed to return at the appointed time, our landlord became uneasy. He sent to the other hotel and finding I was not there, left a note, and then sent a carriage for us with instructions to gather up the Gringos. Just why the driver and his bodyguard felt the necessity of going to the other hotel to obtain the note, before taking us directly to our destination, is one of the unsolved questions.

The question of vital interest to us was something to eat. I had had enough for one day of what had been—or the "Grand Perhaps," as Browning has it. Too much wisdom of guess-work is not good. I wanted the crisp, vital air of the now, which meant dinner wherein was no suggestion of ideals nor idle moments until hunger was appeased. Then I climbed the stone steps leading from the court to the chambers above, and looking up saw the stars in the blue vault. They were familiar and comforting, and soon the blessed Nirvana of sleep obliterated the last thought of pyramid, pagan temple, or aught of earth, and rest was sweet that dreamless night. Your idle FRANK.

XXII

"Love's eyes are blind, but in their blindness there is more light than in all other earthly things."

Alice Writes

Inexperienced in the ways of the world, and with my whole heart answering to every word of love, to his every plea, yet I could not help but see the fallacy of his argument. And too well I knew the serpent of doubt had entered my Eden never to be driven away or destroyed. How could I know that he would love me always, were I to go away with him. I might be left desolate and alone like the other woman he was now so willing to desert. Oh, the doubt, the torturing questions that seemed to be driving me to insanity; but it was the greatness, the overpowering sense of my sorrow that in some way made me feel that I must fight and try to overcome it. A lesser grief might kill, but this, while it seemed to shut out everything that had made life a paradise in the few months I had lived in the arms of my husband, as I thought him, left me without a plan for the future as yet.

I loved him, though I knew he had ruined the pure sentiment within me, the ideal love, that was without sin or shame before I knew, and now, what was I to do with my life? What could I do?—something definite, soon and very soon. The thought roused all the dormant qualities that had, unknown to myself, existed in my nature, and which must have come from the rugged determination of some of my ancestors. Life, the mysterious gift, was thrust upon me without my consent or knowledge, and, being possessed of the doubtful dower, I must make the best of it.

I think of his letter, and of going away from the place I had called home to a fairyland of make believe, where all would be as we wished it, and not the hard reality these few thinking days past had forced upon me. I find myself wishing we were living where religion sanctioned more than one

wife. Oh, surely, if it were right in one place, why not in another? If only it might be, and then a thought struck me —he had said the wife's name was "Ruth." What if it were the girl I hated. Why, I could laugh at her now, for if it were she, how I would rejoice in the thought that I had possession of her husband, body and soul.

Then a thought, midnight in blackness, struck me as I recalled her words, "Unclean and spotted from the world." O God, I now knew in all its intensity the meaning of the chance words. No, I reasoned, I will not have it so. Before God I am innocent! I will not endure the shame, the wrong. We will go where I may be made his wife and the laws shall be respected; if another must be sacrificed, so be it. He shall be mine and mine only.

I had read many books in the library at Brownings, some I scarcely understood, but now I know the meaning, and recall certain strange, religious rites.

I remember that away back in the phallic or sex-worshipping days woman gave herself to the divinity first. Well, the man I love, despite everything, was my church, my religion, my all. And I gave myself to him with as pure a heart and stainless life as any vestal virgin of old. If in the early ages women dedicated themselves to the temples for a religious purpose, surely if not wrong then it might not be wrong now for a woman to lay her heart, her whole being on the altar of love.

I was innocent then, for I believed myself consecrated by marriage. I did not know that another had a prior right, or that the hours of bliss I enjoyed would of necessity give hours of sorrow to another. If she loved him, with only a shadow of the love I felt for him, the thought of losing him would be like the cold hand of death pressing down on her heart. I knew that I was taking the wine of life from her, and she was left the dregs or refuse of a love which she at least had thought to be hers.

Heaven help me to do what is right! I am so weak and I love him. That is the worst of it, despite everything. The wrong, the burden he has cast upon my life; I love him to my sorrow. "God sends the little ones." Why, oh why did

he send me, if he loved me, into this world where my inheritance seems to be only misery and wretchedness?

With him whom I love I can have happiness at any cost—and guiltless misery away from him. To endure, to overcome, may count in one's mental and spiritual growth. But can I overcome? Ah, me, in whatever direction I turn I see only a blank wall; no way of escape from myself.

I have no one in whom I can confide; I must bear it alone, only Heaven can help me! And I look up at the stars, and in their glittering rays find not one beam of comfort.

Why should I expect anything? God has forgotten me else He would not have permitted me to suffer, to be lost. He knew, He who said to Mary Magdalene, "Go thou, and sin no more." Could He not, out of the countless throngs of angels, have allowed one to come to me that I might have had one whispered word of caution, one glimpse into the future which in all its horror was to open my eyes so soon.

So I think and try to reason, but I gain no peace, no rest from the thoughts that come thick and fast until I am almost crazed, yet no definite plan comes to me.

Then I remembered a sentence I had read somewhere, "Everlasting life will be yours if you deserve it; your present belief or disbelief does not effect the issue."

A light seemed to shine through my mental darkness. If I "deserved it!" I might then enjoy as much in the life to come as any other soul; if so, why should I worry or fret over unsolved questions? Here was something tangible—if everlasting life would be mine, if I deserved it—why might not my life on earth be worth while for myself at least, if I proved myself worthy? And then certain other words came up before my mental vision. "All life is a prayer, strong natures pray most and every sincere earnest prayer is answered." Then henceforth in my weak way, my life should be a prayer and surely the way would be shown me.

I went to sleep that night in a more quiet frame of mind feeling somehow, that I was strengthened and sustained by unknown forces. In my dreams I wandered through a wilderness, bewildered by a maze of paths crossing and re-crossing in interminable confusion, extending on and on into thick shadows.

For ages, it seemed I wandered, endeavoring to find a way out of the labyrinth that encompassed me like spider-webs. Ages of fruitless endeavor in hopeless search for something better and more satisfying were spent. Still I was searching for something I knew not what, when suddenly a straight path, extending from the intricate and confused lines lay before me, and at the beginning was a sign with only one word, "Alone."

And then as my eyes followed the path, in the dim misty distance I saw a vague shadowy form with arms extended towards me, and the face—oh, how it thrilled me with joy!—it was the face that used to bend over me when I awakened, and the same arms that lifted me to the untold happiness of a tender love were now entreating me to come of my own accord.

I was awakened by a succession of rollicking notes, and realized that a linnet had perched upon a rosebush twined across my window. I watched him as he sang in all the abandon of joy as he poured forth his untaught notes from his little red throat—a vivified atom—happy because he was free. Ah, I thought that is the idea, he is free to do exactly as he pleases; there are no laws to govern him. He is only a little bird, but how delightful it must be to wander untrammeled hither and thither through all his short life, care free and happy; because he has no oppressive thoughts of right or wrong.

And then I wondered why God ordained that we should suffer, when every created thing in the world except poor humanity is free from the burden of thought.

I tried to reason with my conscience, that there was no human being worth the sacrifice of my happiness or my life. Why not live my life according to my wishes and desires? What was that other woman to me, when I possessed the love of him she had the right only by law to call her husband.

Ah, there was the sting. He was hers according to the law, and if he loved me as he said, why had he not according to the law put her away before he had cheated me into believing I was his wife. The whole force of his deception and treachery seemed to strike me as it had not done before.

My mind was growing clearer and stronger now. No! By the memory of last night's dream I would end it all today, so I wrote:

"I think I could forgive everything but deceit. You have lived and made me live a lie for a whole year, in peace, in happiness and tranquility. How can you atone for the deception? How can you expect forgiveness? The world was beautiful, it was a sweet, pure world for me, for I have been innocent of wrong. But can I expect peace now? Even were you always with me, it would be the peace of purgatory I fear, gloss it over as we might.

"I see the birds I have loved and envied winging their way high in the sunshine up toward the fleecy clouds in the blue skies, and singing as they wing their way towards the sea, or high above me swinging on the highest boughs in the sheer delight of living, as I too have sung for a happy year past. But now the thought that I have been happy because I was like the birds brings a sting of bitterness that eats like an acid into my heart.

"The happy wife is not a wife at all! Oh, the hurt of it, the agony the knowledge has cost me. Looking back I know and feel the beautiful trust is gone, and ahead of me I see only ceaseless doubt and uncertainty, a life of loneliness and dread of what is to come, but which must be borne.

"My fate was to meet you, to love you, and my love was based on nothing stable. It was built on crumbling sands. Do you consider it a triumph to have filled my life with a joy that nothing on earth could ever equal, only to defile my life that was pure and white, with a love scarcely grown cold on the altar of your home?

"My soul cries out against the injustice. Why did you seek me, an innocent girl? Why did you not find some one, a woman of your world who knew the ways of men? If I could only know that you might be made to suffer a tithe of what I feel. If I knew you never could be happy again in other loves, I might feel different. But the strength of my love seems to change into a wild bitterness against you.

"I want you to forget the life we have lived, to keep away from me, and let me forget—if I can—the wrong you have done me. If I live in the years to come I may forgive,

because I have loved so much; until then I will not see you if I can avoid it.

"You have crucified me upon your miserable Calvary, built up of excuses, and a hot-house love that would wither as quickly perhaps as it bloomed, when satiety and a new fancy struck you. There are girls as innocent, as young, as helpless, and far more beautiful than I, easily found by a "man of the world" who has wealth and the desire for new sensations.

"What do you care about innocence and purity that you speak of? You had the opportunity to aid and befriend me. You had a home to which you could have taken me, and given shelter to the adopted daughter of your friends. The life of sin and shame you depict need not of necessity have been mine. I am not penniless, it was not necessary for me to walk the streets searching for sin or employment.

"My thought was to hide away somewhere in the South until I was of age; in some retreat near my mother's grave, until I could do as I wished. So much I had planned. And when I met you I thought in my ignorance that you, the friend who had promised so much would aid me. And loving and trusting you with my whole soul, as you know I believed in you as in my Savior.

"I can see clearly now much that was not plain and which puzzled me, but because I was so unutterably happy and with no idea of wrong, I thought that everything you planned or did must be right, because I thought you were my husband and it was my pleasure and delight to obey you in all things.

"And now you write, asking me to fly with you to the ends of the earth to a paradise of our own creation. It is a little late for a paradise for us two now. Had you taken me before I knew the truth, then I might have lived and died with an unshaken faith in the goodness of God, and man made in His image.

"But now, now what shall I say to you, who have killed the best that is in me—only this: I shall pray God to forgive you. I have not enough of Christ in my soul to say that I forgive you, for you knew what you were doing. Until then I too shall strive to forget, to roll up the days

that have gone, and seal them with the seal of forgetfulness, as I fold up this, the first and last letter I shall ever write to you, and give you for remembrance this thought: Judas was a man and he betrayed with a kiss!" * * * *

I finished the letter, gave it to Mrs. Andrews with instructions to give it to the doctor when he came. I feared to keep it lest my courage fail. It must go. I would send it, though deep in my heart I knew it was a lie.

Hate him! When every fibre of my body, every instinct of my soul longed for him, longed with a fervor that frightened me. If he had wronged me in the eyes of the world, he had also loved me. Ah! I knew that only too well. But the physician was coming and I must not falter. I knew that in order to save myself from one sin I must commit another. The Ten Commandments were explicit. I must break one commandment in order that I keep another. For the sin of covetousness was mine, for my whole heart was hungering, pleading for a forbidden love; even while I was false to myself in pretending to hate.

There were no explicit directions so far as I knew, as to which one of the commandments it was preferable to observe, and failing in one, why not in all? For I could not deny that I worshipped with my whole soul the man more than the Creator.

Yet even while I faltered, trying to find excuses, beneath them all lay a purpose, inexorable, unyielding, and I knew that though I fell fainting by the way that I must go. I saw the road like a white band of ribbon, gleaming amid the darker lines and the one word "Alone" staring at me where the white line began, and ever and beyond in the pale gray mist hovering over ridges whereon were mysterious tints, stood that one figure with open arms. I must cleave to one and forsake the other. My mother had not forsaken me.

"He shall give his angels charge concerning thee," flashed across my mind. God has not forgotten me and I—of my own free will—no matter what the cost, will tread the path alone!

Yet another letter was given me after the physician had gone away with mine. The last I should receive, I knew and I felt I must read this last message. It began:

"If the magnetic needle of the compasses used on ships at sea may be deflected by some mysterious magnetic influences, of masses of basaltic rock at a distance of a great number of miles, may not the human system be equally affected by the magnetic influences of another being, to a far greater extent than we know? And though it result in shipwreck at sea, it can only be beneficial when the influence draws, even compels, as it does me, toward the soothing restful influence of your warm loving heart.

"I have never felt your magnetism, your wonderful influence as I have during the hours since I last wrote you. While drawing me toward you across the short distance of waters that separate us, you in some way seem farther away. Fanciful, am I dear? Yet I do not harbor the thought of losing you, for it would mean the shipwreck of all in life I hope for. But loving you as I do, I cannot help the fear that I might lose you, especially as there must of necessity be some change in your affairs, unless you have offended the Brownings by your sudden disappearance.

"Mr. Browning died two days ago and I learn the widow is not expected to live. It may be there will be a search for you if you should inherit any of the property. I am anxious for your sake and mine. It would ruin both of us were you to be traced. Then our secret would be made public.

"Therefore I feel I must see you soon as possible and write today that you may expect me tomorrow. We must plan for the future without delay. You will find it best perhaps to go away for a short time until we know if you will be wanted. If so, it will be easy to establish your claims if you have any, and all the more easily if you will act according to my plans.

"I am only making suggestions in order to prepare you somewhat for anything which may happen. But I want particularly to impress this fact upon your mind, and it is that we must submit to certain formulas of the law if necessary, but in any event I shall not submit to a separation from you my darling.

"I want to be near you, to watch over you and to do everything possible to make your life easy, and you must allow me to arrange all necessary details. I want to spare you the pain of any insinuation or suspicion in any form.

"Nothing but your illness would have kept me from you or prevented my coming, for our affection—mine—perhaps I should say has reached that condition when I am prepared to sacrifice everything for its exercise.

"The short time I have been away from you has seemed years, and my only dreams, sleeping or waking, are of the time when I can again take my dear girl's face in my hands and from her true eyes drink sweet draughts of love ineffable.

"Ah, darling, you and I must forget the world and its opinions, in so far as it conflicts with our love, which burns brighter as the weeks go by. And as it is now, so it will be for all time to come. My guiding star, my hope! You my darling, you my love, you my all! Your tender presence, your sympathetic soul, your refined nature, represent to me the definition and confines of love.

"I write but a little of what is in my heart. Tomorrow, dear one, how tenderly I shall whisper over and over the old sweet words: I love you and you alone!"

The last letter and the last word, "alone," is engraven on my heart. I am saying good bye to you my confidant for a time; and the dear little cottage, the only home I ever knew! I am taking a last look through a blurred vision. I have told Mrs. Andrews that my husband has sent for me, that I am going on a journey south for my health, as he has advised. That she is to remain here until further orders. She seems very much distressed; thinks I am not able to go alone, but I assure her the distance to the city being short, will not tire me.

XXIII

"A land of promise flowing with the milk and honey of delicious memories."

Oaxaca, dear Jack, lies two hundred miles south of Puebla and was my next place of interest after Cholula. So, in the cold and gloom of a day that was to be, I found myself at the station and looked in vain for an eating room. There was no vestige of anything edible or drinkable, and a journey of thirteen hours was ahead of me.

The high stools at a counter, with the familiar plate of life-preservers and unbreakable coffee cups at home would have been welcome. I wasn't drowning or catching at any stray straws, but doughnuts and restaurant coffee would have tasted like "mother's best" in comparison to the coffee and bread I finally received through the aid of a fellow traveler, who pointed out the eating place to me.

It was on the outside of the station. A couple of women hovered over a tiny charcoal fire, sheltering it from the bleak winds—and the coffee pot also, that tried to boil in the frosty atmosphere. But the coffee was warm as the bread was hard and cold. It was a sort of cold storage proposition, but better than the aching void that clamored for something besides scenery.

Starvation pangs averted, I found a seat in the cars, and we left Puebla, the city the angels are supposed to guard, but which at least is a city of churches, whose domes and towers of polished tiles looked fanciful and unique in the gray dawn. Puebla is celebrated for its manufactories and the effect of the colored tiled roofs is pleasing.

The fields were glittering with white frost that seemed strangely out of place so far south. Yet an altitude of seven thousand feet counts even in the tropics. Half-clad, ghost-like, figures showed dimly in the fields as we sped along. And though well wrapped up and in the cars, I, too, was shivering with cold, and looked with pity upon the unshod laborers.

Fires in the cars are not to be thought of here unless it be the exception.

The only car off the main lines where I traveled that had the proud distinction of a stove, took fire shortly after we had started, and the affair was more laughable than otherwise. I thought I smelled smoke on that particular occasion other than the usual tobacco smoke, when a gentleman seated in front of me turned and said:

"Do you know that the car is on fire?"

"I do not feel any warmer; where is the fire?" I replied.

"Look at the top of the car and then watch the natives when they discover it," he said.

CARRYING THE OLLAS — WATER-COOLERS.

By that time the roof was burning pretty lively, and then the conductor discovered it. So did the women, and there was a hustling and gathering of bundles, some in their excitement throwing them out of the windows. A menagerie of monkeys wouldn't compare with them. At last the train stopped, and the amusing part of it was that our car was landed directly over another cross-road! The fire was finally extinguished and we proceeded on our way, escaping fire and a wreck only by good luck.

This digression is only to prove that it is better for the traveler in Mexico not to expect too much, but be content with whatever is provided for the discomforts of the wanderer, and thankful at times for what he does not receive.

We passed through rich agricultural districts, on and on, until the country became more desolate and broken. But, however, straggling the villages were, it was surprising to

see the number of churches, whose domes glistened, and brightened the landscape in every direction. They bear witness to the zeal and energy of the Padres, who built and worked to eradicate pagan rites, and the peaceful, simple religion that now exists, and these churches are enduring monuments of their endeavors.

From the mesas we passed into a picturesque country. There were ranges of mountains and isolated buttes, with vivid coloring and Pompeiian reds, turrets and shapes that looked like old abandoned castles. Bits from the Old World seemed to have dropped down here in a region of fantastic groupings of peaks and hills. Yet, it was all nature's own carving.

We slipped down and down until we were only about seventeen hundred feet above sea level. Everywhere were to be seen the vivid green patches of sugar cane, and we were in a region of perpetual summer. Corn flourished in all stages, from the young tiny leaves just showing above the ground, up to the ripened ears, and the bright lance-like leaves waving in the warm winds.

All manner of fruits grow in this region. Luscious oranges and tiny bananas—the most delicious I have ever tasted, were offered for sale at every station. And at an eating station where the food was abundant and good, we had delicious lemonade served, which was far more acceptable to me than the tea or coffee offered, for we were getting a taste of the tropical heat.

Along the road I saw great trees with cucumbers growing thickly upon the branches, looking like those we have in California, but they are eaten by the natives only.

The yellow lovevine, which grows on weeds and shrubs with us, is ambitious down here and climbs to the tops of large trees, a golden glory flaunting in the breeze.

I rode on the engine of our train through a cañon scarcely equaled by any on our continent. The road runs through a dangerous cañon, or rather a successions of cañons. The passage is never attempted at night, and even by daylight the utmost caution is necessary. Most especially is this needed in the summer months when the rains which are almost daily, loosen

the soil from the precipitous walls that often hang directly overhead.

I heard many thrilling stories from the engineer, an American—they do not trust the natives here in matters requiring a steady nerve and quick brain. I also learned much that was new to me of the habits of the country. Down here in the southland, if an engineer runs over a man and kills him, there is no fuss or trouble about it, but if an ox-cart, donkey or anything of the kind is thrown from the track by the engine, animals killed, cart broken or smashed in the usual way, the owner or driver, if he escapes, is arrested by the engineer and he is put in jail for obstructing the road.

The engineer told me he had probably killed fifty men, but had never been reprimanded. A little too much of their favorite pulque and they have no fear, but will step in front of an engine and try to stop it. He told me his greatest trouble was in forcing the native firemen to wear clothing, and that he objected to the meat and their manner of cooking it, which was their especial delight. I said I thought they could not afford the luxury of meat. Then he explained that there are great worms to be found on the maguey plant, and added:

"When we stop for a moment near any of these plants, the firemen run and cut off the sharp needle-pointed ends of the leaves, impale the worms and bring them and cook them on the boiler."

"You surely ought to give them some pleasure," I said. "You insist that the native wear a shirt, he insists on his meat, which evens things a bit."

Then he told me of the intense heat in the cañon during the summer months; that life was almost unbearable, and extras, like the worm-diet, were almost too much for him.

I listened to him, but was more impressed by the scenery than the dress or the lack of it, and the diet of the natives. I watched the tortuous road and the foaming rushing river that in many places has been diverted from its original channel and forced into new ones to accommodate the railroad. The great cliffs tower so high above the road that in places they shut out the light. Yet they are picturesquely beautiful, covered with a red soil in varying shades.

The beauty of the steep declivities is enhanced by the strangely odd growth of gray-green organ cactus that grows even to the very summit of the peaks. An invincible army in solid phalanx, they harbor no aliens, and except a few varieties of trees, seem to have complete possession of the Cañon de los Cues. Tall, straight as the pipes of an organ, they grow to the height of from thirty to forty feet. Bristling with thorns, they seem at war with everything foreign. They are the vegetable sun-worshipers and love the stifling hot air of the hills and of these furnace-like cañons, the sun-baked earth and arid deserts. If in the shade of some rock or tree, they pine for the sun's hot rays and wither away. I know of nothing more impressive than these gaunt spectre-like shafts, in groups or sentinel-like on the verge of some dizzy height, pointing like great fingers toward the skies.

The day was full of strange contrasts—first the high table lands, then the tierra caliente, with its luxuriant vegetation, then on the up-grade through the cañon, where the water flows toward the north until the summit of the range was gained, and we rolled down by an easy grade to Oaxaca into the semi-tropical valley, the pretty city that is five thousand feet above sea level.

The day was ended and so was the railroad, for Oaxaca is the southernmost point in Mexico reached by rail. Some day the railroad will be extended and the "backbone railway," mythical for years will be a reality and North and South America will be united by steel threads and iron ties. Such ties are a necessity here, unless they learn to petrify the omnipresent cacti.

Oaxaca, where I found cordial greetings—thanks to the telegraph wires and kind hearts—boasts of being the birthplace of President Diaz, and in the vicinity another famous President—Juarez—the "Lincoln of Mexico," was born.

In this small queer old town of thirty thousand inhabitants is the Church of Santa Dominga, that cost thirteen millions of dollars, and other churches less costly, but grand in architectural beauty. There are legends connected with historical truths, bizarre decorations, secret underground passages that

speak of troublous times in ages past. It astonishes the traveler to see these magnificent edifices in this small place.

The city is where a prosperous Indian settlement existed in 1486. Conditions have not changed greatly in the rural life, I fancy for centuries past. The natives till the soil in the old way, use the same cumbrous two-wheeled carts, tie the heavy wooden bars to the horns of the oxen. The whole of the burden must be pulled by the horns instead of the yoke as we know it.

I know of nothing more barbarous, more brutal than this method employed by the natives. The sufferings of the poor

A CORN CART IN MEXICO AND ORGAN CACTUS.

beasts are evidenced by the fact that the brain is soon affected by the weight and constant jarring, jerking motion of the clumsy carts. They would not tolerate anything other than that they have known and has been in use since the deluge. That which was good enough hundreds of years ago is sufficient for the present.

Progression and a betterment of conditions do not worry them. Their thoughts do not seem in advance of the day. The oxen may become locoed by work and needless cruelty,

but an Indian would never use his brain in trying to devise or invent anything different for himself or his beast.

And so the soil is tilled with the same kind of implements used ages ago by the tribes. They raise everything imaginable with little trouble. Wild cotton grows on trees; so do cucumbers and other vegetables and wild fruits. And the markets were filled with every variety of cultivated fruits and vegetables, and were the best I had seen. They spin and weave cloth for their clothing, make their blankets, hats and serapes, and are a primitive race.

They have not as yet learned the wiles of those further north. They ask a fair price for their commodities and do not seem troubled if the would-be purchaser objects. You are free to take it or leave it. They are not very insistent sellers.

I attended a dance given by the Indians in the market place on New Year's Eve. The men wore their serapes and sombreros, and most of them wore shoes or sandals, but nearly all of the reboso draped women danced barefooted, and one and all appeared to be supremely happy. The Governor was present and the Mayor, or Jefe also. Wine was passed freely among the crowd. The carriers were preceded by one who bore a transparency announcing that the "Hombres" were not to touch the wine, it being the gift of the Governor—was only for the senoras and senoritas.

It was amusing to me to watch the women, bashful and shy, yet eager to taste the wine of the Governor. That there were lips which were unused to such indulgence was evident by their wry faces, gurgles and sputterings following an effort to swallow the red, red wine.

Politics and an effort to be popular with the masses were evident in the city, for the new Jefe allowed the natives to take complete possession of one of the plazas for one week; and the astonishing number and variety of gambling games that occupied every available foot of ground showed how thoroughly they enjoyed and appreciated the favor.

There was no set machinery, or "your-weight-age-and-fortune" prevaricating boxes, but simple games and many that seemed about an even thing, and so primitive that it was

fascinating to watch the crowd chance their few centavos, apparently unmoved either by loss or gain.

The natives in this section of the country are much cleaner and more prosperous than the Indians farther north. They are not migratory, but cultivate their own little patches among the hills, a few being thrifty enough to possess an acre or so. They speak their own language, knowing or caring but little about anything beyond their border lines.

I enjoyed the quaint old town, and the plazas where grow immense trees. The wild fig trees especially were enormous. They give a grateful shelter through the day, and provide a safe roosting place for the buzzards at night.

I saw these uncanny birds come wearily home in the dusk of an evening as I sat in one of the plazas and breathed the fragrance of unknown and unseen flowers. I watched the strange medley that thronged the paths and the streets, listened to the soft twitterings of birds and the lilt of the Mexican patois, and heard the softening cadence or rhythm of sounds, soothing and sweet, that arose from the city, the thousands of voices, the music that came from stringed instruments, subtly interwoven sonorous waves of music from the church bells blending sweetly, yet throbbing an exultant over the lesser sounds.

The spell of the country fell upon me. The hurry and uselessness of our energetic life passed away for the moment. The hunger of travel or need of excitement was gone. I drifted out of the twentieth century. I was free from remembrances, speculations or desires, and for a few trance-like moments it was as though experiencing some other stage of existence. Then the old sensations came back with full swing, and I hardly knew why, but I found myself repeating the lines:

> "We muse and brood
> And ebb into a former life, or seem
> To lapse far back in some confused dream
> To states of mystical similitude."

At least I know what it is to live for a few moments unleashed and untrammeled by the world's environments. And I wonder now if I had for a space drifted into the atmosphere of the past, or rather if a revelation of a life that had

been, was given me or an understanding of the existing circumstances of the primitive people here, who know no other world than that within their narrow border lines was mine for the moment. If so, theirs is not an existence to despise.

FRANK.

XXIV

"Do you believe that you would be any more my wife, if a form of words had been spoken between us? Are the man and woman forsooth who are made for each other and who would cleave to each other through time and death and eternity to be considered less married in God's eyes than the wretches who are bound together by the fetters of expediency, fraud and love of gold?"

As Told in the Journal.

How often we shape our plans and build hopes without counting upon unforeseen things which may in a moment interfere with the structures we have carefully erected—the house beautiful, which promised so much.

I planned and the house was not beautiful. It was built of loneliness and desperation; but out of a determination to do what I thought was best for me, and what seemed right for me.

So I went out once again in the garden for a last look. Overhead the wanton roses were reaching out not content with their limitations, but flinging out long pliant branches, odorous and sweet with bloom, into the arms of the trees, which in turn seemed to reach down tenderly for the twining, clinging sweetness that climbed up to their strong arms which promised security nearer the sky and the warm sunshine.

Involuntarily I reached up my arms. "Oh, I need the strength, the security of something more stable than myself. I am weak and faint. What shall I do? I cannot go away. I am so miserable, so wretched. O Heaven, help me!" I cried, sinking down on my knees, striving to overcome my failing strength, and the loneliness that oppressed me.

I heard a step and striving to rise hurriedly caught my foot and would have fallen only I grasped the arm of the garden seat for a moment. Then I felt my hand removed and I was clasped close to the heart of the one I loved better than life itself; though I was even then ready to fly from him.

A moment's bliss in his arms, all the sweets of life were mine, love filled every part of my existence. The music of birds sang in my soul, flowers bloomed now, where only a cold, desolate barren life had lain before me in the days of my illness and sorrow.

I knew now I was crowned with the halo of love, which is woman's existence; that deep in my heart, were I denied the love which I knew was mine that I should not be content. But I would be satisfied, if like Lazarus of old, I might only have a crumb now and then from the table of his love.

And all the while he was raining kisses upon my face, my hair, holding me in his arms, speaking in whispers of his love, his great sorrow for me, my illness and the grief he had caused me. I struggled to get away from him, but he would not allow it.

"Rest here, sweetheart and hear me; I have so much to say before I allow you to talk," he murmured. "First of all I want to impress upon your mind that it is impossible for us to live apart. I have realized this while you have been ill, and I know too well that it is grief and not sickness that has brought you almost to death's door."

Ah, heaven and I know it only too well I thought.

"I want to say," he went on soothingly, "that marriage simply means obeying the laws of our land, but love is heaven sent and heaven born. Look into my eyes, dear, and tell me if the laws of men shall weigh heavier in the balance than love, the higher and truer. Would you allow the lower to crowd out the higher gift, the sweeter law of God? Think of this moment of happiness. Is it not worth a whole lifetime, lying before us bleak and dreary without love, warm and glowing, and rich with it. Our hearts, our souls can never be divided. We have entered into love's realm; and the complete realization of love, such as most human beings long for, fills our hearts, our lives, which can never more be separated. My sweet, it was the guiding hand of heaven that brought you into my life, my innocent little flower, the fairest and dearest in all the world, to help me, to diffuse your sweetness into my life. With you I shall be a better man, for you are an incentive, you bring forth the best impulses of my nature."

"Oh, how can you say these things?" I cried. "The best impulses of your nature when for me you have forgotten your vows to your lawful wife."

"Yes, lawful in the sense of the law only, but by every divine law I am yours, and you have saved me from temptation of which you know nothing. I was plunging headlong into vice when you came like a star and saved me from myself. I can see the question in your eyes, and will say that even had I not found you and your dear satisfying love, that I should soon have arranged for a separation from my wife; I hoped it would have been accomplished by this time, but have not been able to do so yet."

"All that you say may be true, but does not change the fact that you have practiced an unpardonable deception on me," I cried. "And now you come to me when I am least able to withstand your love, your entreaties. Why did you come today? Did you not receive my letter?"

"No, I could not wait to see the physician. I wanted to see you, for it seemed to me that you needed me today, and I think I came at the right moment. Mrs. Andrews told me you were going to come to me. I was astonished, but merely said I had come for you. Now tell me what it means? The idea of you going away from here when you are so weak that you can scarcely stand."

"I am sorry that you did not receive my letter, for it would have spared us both some bitter moments; for I am going away. It was an excuse to get away from here. I had no intention of going to you or ever seeing you again."

He turned more fully toward me, and his face grew ghastly, the pallor deepening until I thought he would faint.

"Leave me? Never see me again? Oh, you could not be so cruel!" Then with a half sob he caught hold of my hands.

"Do you not know that this earth is not large enough for you to go beyond the reach of these arms; that my love would take me unerringly to you wherever you might hide? Ask your own heart if it be not so. You must not think of doing this dreadful thing. You would be far more guilty going away than you think, for you would have murder on your soul."

"Murder, what do you mean?"

"That I shall not live without you," he replied. "I mean it, I do not want to frighten you, but I want you to know beyond all doubt that you are all and more than life to me. And denied your presence, it will be an easy matter to end this suffering and a useless life."

I was horrified at the earnestness of purpose which was evident, and all the while there was something in my heart that was pleading for him and myself.

Why should we both be sacrificed? I thought. If he could not love the one who bore his name, if in time he could arrange that we two might face the world and declare our love as the one thing right in marriage according to the world's ruling; surely we might have the one little remaining joy left, the chance of seeing one another, of living while we waited.

Ah, he knew I hesitated. And with all the strength of his love he pleaded; breaking down one by one my resolutions. And when I pitifully told him of my dream and my conviction, that it was sent to me as a warning that I should go away alone, he reasoned with me and said:

The white road meant Love's road, and "Alone" meant it was the only way to tread, for by love we would be purified and saved. "Love ye one another" is Holy writ and we will observe and obey, loving one another now, and for all time to come."

Carried away by the intensity of his passion I seemed to have no will of my own. All doubts and fears were driven away by the magnetism of his presence. Love was enough! I could not fight against it any longer.

Then he told me he had made plans for the future, and that I must aid him in his efforts to do what was best for us both.

"I understand your secret, Alice. I did not some months ago, and my first care is for you only. That is why I came to see you. You cannot be left here alone any longer. The physician has so instructed me. I have arranged matters that will be satisfactory to all. You are to be known as Mrs. Bertram, and you are to come to my home as my cousin."

"Your cousin," I cried in amazement. "Oh, I cannot do it! How could I live under the roof with—with the woman who bears your name." I choked here, for I could not say "wife."

"I know, my darling, and this plan hurts me more than you think, but it is necessary for our happiness, and for your sake far more than you know now. Knowledge may be yours in time, but not if I can ward it off, or save you a moment's pain. Ruth knows nothing of my family, and if it should be known that you are an adopted child of the Brownings, it would cause no comment. Your parents are dead, you have been in a convent since you were a child until recently. I think I can arrange matters so you will not be called upon to tell much of your past life. Ruth is not inclined to gossip and is refined and considerate." He paused a moment, then added: "She has had a great sorrow in her life, not very long ago and will be sure to sympathize with you."

"Sympathy! Do you think I want her sympathy?" I cried. "I love you better than my life, but it seems to me that I am not strong enough to do what you ask."

"Strength will come to you when you feel you are doing this for my sake, and because I ask and beg you to be guided by me. It is for the three of us that I ask you to do as I have planned. It will save needless suffering and publicity."

"I do not know what you mean," I said.

"There are complications which you cannot understand now. But when I tell you, with my thorough knowledge of the situation that I have been studying for weeks and months, finally deciding that this is the only feasible plan, I ask you to do as I wish. And I know before very long all will be arranged so the world will not trouble us or our affairs."

He talked and reasoned with me until I had no will of my own, and I finally said:

"I will do this for your sake, though I would not for anything else in the world. But to save you a pang or an hour's trouble I would do all that I have done over for you and your love. I could die without a murmur, but I cannot live without you. I know it—have known it—all the while, no

matter what I have said or written. Take me. I am all yours, I shall live only for you. I shall drink deeper and deeper draughts from the fountain of your dear love until mine shall be the bliss of a draught of Nepenthe—the magic cup that puts sorrow and care away. So I shall forget all—all but you, who are my king, my prince, as when we wandered in fairyland. I will do as you ask—because you ask it. Nothing else could induce me to go through the ordeal, but I would do and dare everything for you and your love, my darling—the wondrous beautiful love which fills my heart, my soul, for I feel no suffering, no heartache will be too hard to endure, if in the end I have the recompense of your arms about me to sustain me. I shall need all of your heart, all your sympathy and tenderness to help me in doing what you tell me I must do. But once again I beg of you to try to devise some other way. Is there nothing left but this alternative? Could you not in time learn to forget me and be happy with—the one you once loved?"

"Do not speak of it ever again," he said almost roughly. "I once thought before I met you, my Alice—before your face with its wonderful star-lit eyes drew my heart, my soul to yours in indissoluble union that I loved Ruth Carrington. But though I married her, I soon learned we were not congenial to each other. She had a sweet disposition I knew, but did not know that she was too rigid in her views of life—as I understand and appreciate it. The touch of Bohemianism in my nature, good times with a jolly crowd, I soon found were not to her liking. She ought to have married a minister. She wanted a quiet home life and whatever social affairs we had, was simply because I desired them. We could not agree on matters of social life, and she chose to isolate herself more and more shortly after we were married, until finally I went alone everywhere."

All the while he was speaking, my mind was in a whirl. "Ruth Carrington." Ah, I remembered the name too well. So she was my old enemy! She, the girl I had disliked since I was a child—she, the one I had always desired to meet, and my prayers had been that I might be more beautiful than she. Surely I was—for I had gained the love of the man whose name she bore. Like lightning the thoughts

flashed through my brain. Indecision, scruples and doubts were all swept aside. I would go. I would triumph over my enemy, and furthermore I would possess her husband. For he was mine—mine by the divine law of love which was higher than any earthly law I thought. Then once more the words were mine: "Love sacrifices all things to bless the thing it loves, not destroy," and I would dare all for the sake of him whom my soul loved.

But of this sudden change in my feelings I said nothing. The triumph would be mine. She who had scorned me and hurt my childish heart should now in turn feel that "mills of the gods grind slowly." But vengeance was mine, and I was glad that I now had the opportunity to triumph. I would be the crowned queen—she the dethroned one in her own domain.

"Forgive me dear," I said meekly. "I was a bit jealous—you do not know how cruel I could be—if I thought you would cease to care for me. You are mine, I tell you now, nothing shall separate us. I have cast every scruple aside—I care for nothing. I pledge you." And I picked up the glass of wine from which he had been drinking as we sat at luncheon, which had been brought us while we talked.

"I am free from all that is past

> "'Free as the soul of the fragrant wine,
> I will drink to the thought of a better time.'"

I stood up and drained the glass—the second time in my life I had tasted wine, and continued

> "'For I heed not custom, creed, or law'"—

I shall care only for you, shall think only of you. I want no remembrance of life before I knew you. I do not want to look forward. Love that heaven itself with you is all I ask. If this is folly what divine folly it is! So let us be the veriest fools in love's realm and now behold your captive," and I reached out my hands to him.

> "Take all of me, I am thine own, heart, soul,
> Brain, body—all that I am or dream
> Is thine forever."

XXV

"One day the sands will loose their seal, and they will speak."

From Oaxaca, Jack, I went to Mitla, which lies on the border of Tehuantepec. We drove over a road, one of the oldest in Mexico. It looked as though it had not been repaired for three hundred years. Six mules were required to take me and the driver to Mitla. It was one of the hardest

HUT AND CACTUS FENCE, MITLA.

trips I have ever taken. A drive of one hundred and seventeen miles over a mountainous road in Norway, once with one horse, was like riding in a trolley car compared to this drive of thirty-six miles. I ceased to wonder that so few travelers have the courage to make the trip. Unfortunately for me I had read glowing accounts of the Mitla road, written, I am sure, by people who had never seen the place or the road—the "up hill and down dale," broad highway," etc.

The distance in California with our horses—more than two would not be thought of—would be only a trivial affair; but with the mules attached to the carriage it was different. Had the number been doubled and the lash spared the poor creatures I might have been more indifferent to the road.

On leaving Oaxaca, the railroad terminus, I entered into a more primitive country than I had ever visited. There were no telegraph or telephone wires with sentinel posts guarding this ancient highway, but there was the usual medley of ox-carts, donkeys, men and women.

The oxen here as elsewhere pull the massive carts and heavy loads by the heavy piece of wood attached to the horns. All the products of the country for most of the distance from Mitla, and perhaps from that vicinity, must be carried by the beasts or the natives to the city. Now and then we passed small villages where the natives live in huts fenced in by the ever present organ cactus, which constitutes about the only style of fence here.

For once it was refreshing, however, to travel through a country unmarred by hieroglyphics representing the patent remedies that with the customers are sold by all druggists. There are no startling announcements of ready pain producers and hair eradicators. The King of Soaps had not sent any telegrams announcing his coming to a country of the great unwashed. Liver exterminators—nerves extracted without pain—had not passed the pulque stands. Health foods—on paper or boards—are not necessary where corn is king, indeed, and fruits and vegetables are accessories to the fact.

The cactus fences are free from the word painter and poster artist. So are the people. Bacilli and bacteria haunt them not. If they know nothing of the richness of possession why should one try to disillusion them? Happily they trudge through life, and if their shoulders are bowed by burdens they have been real rather than imaginary or mental, I fancy.

We turned aside at the village of Tule, which, besides its famous "big tree," has more children and dogs to the square inch than any other village in Mexico.

The tree I visited—it was also honored by a visit from Humboldt in 1804—the tablet commemorating his visit is

almost a part of the tree, the bark having grown over it and partly covered it. It is an ahuehuete or swamp cypress and

CHILDREN AT GATEWAY OF ORGAN HEDGE.

looks as if two or three trees had formed a partnership affair. They have grown into one tree, which is about one hundred and fifty-four feet in circumference several feet from the ground.

Passing en route another unimportant village, Tlacolula, we had a glimpse of a plaza, market place and an old church —three things that help to make up even the smallest of villages.

A plaza is absolutely indispensable in a Mexican town—a luxury everywhere—but a necessity here, where the houses run flush with the streets, with seldom, if ever, a garden in front, and the small box-like houses without windows give small opportunities for fresh air or sunshine.

We went through miles of country, the tedium of travel lessened in part because of the legends and historical facts attached to this region. The dust blew in thick yellow clouds over the deeply-worn road. The landscape was quivering in a blaze of light that had a somnolent silence, broken often by the crack of the driver's whip as it lashed the poor beasts, who were quivering with fatigue and weakness. But there were bright flowers by the wayside, birds sang, and everywhere there were bunches of red on twigs and dry cornstalks. They were tiny birds, whose bright wings flashed in the sunlight as we passed them. Then the mountains narrowed, the landscape became more desolate and cheerless, the mountain slopes were barren and boulder strewn, as were the fields.

I had a glimpse of a few Indian huts. A low, square house, forbidding in exterior, greeted me—and dust-covered and weary we stopped at an old hacienda, or inn, feeling almost a part and parcel of the ruins around me.

Don Felix, the proprietor, made me welcome, and I was soon refreshed and sallied out to visit the wonderful ruins of Mitla. They stand today as when the Spaniards came. Valencia visited them in 1533, and found them as they are now—vast temples of stone, beautiful mosaics, halls and corridors. Huge monoliths support immense slabs, for the builders had no arches over their square cut doorways.

I can only give a passing description of these ruins, lying in a more desolate region than any I have ever visited. Egypt's ruined temples — Denderah, Thebes, Karnak, Assouan—and her pyramids and tombs, lying along the Nile for hundreds of miles, had the fertile country and the Nile's inundations back of them even before the first corner stone

was placed—a rich and prolific country furnished an abundance of the needful things of life. But in this desolate strip of country, guarded by equally desolate mountains, it seems that nothing in an agricultural way could have been sufficient to support a race who planned and built these temples.

There are no evidences of quarries in the vicinity where the stones used in the buildings might have been obtained, and, if taken from near Oaxaca, there was no convenient river, no Nile where these slabs and monoliths might have been transported to build these temples, of one of which, an

FRONT OF PALACE, MITLA RUINS.

architect, a Frenchman, wrote: "The monuments of Greece and Rome in their best time can alone compare with the splendor of this great edifice," meaning the principal ruin known as the Palace, which is one hundred and twenty feet in length.

The blocks of stone forming the square doorways are so immense that I thought of those vast slabs in the ruins at Baalbac. Yet these ruins are not to be compared in height to those of the former, being flat roofed, with low walls. The ornamentation is geometrical and the mosaic work beautiful in its perfect symmetry. It would strike even a care-

less observer that the builders were faultless and perfect masters of their art. The Palace rests upon a pyramid recently discovered. The accumulated soil of centuries has filled in around it and covered the pyramid so the Palace seems to rest upon the ground.

New things are being found in the ruins in the old world. Will anything ever be found that will explain the ruins of Mitla? Mitla—Lio-baa, "the place of the tombs," mystery of mysteries, unless light may at some future time be thrown upon the enigma. It is the most vexing problem that has confronted archæologists and students of American history.

The vast extent of these ruins, as I wandered from one group to another—there are, I believe, five of them—astonished me, with all previous knowledge gained from reading.

Their obvious antiquity carries one to a remote era. They might have been contemporaries with Solomon. Perchance they were built when the Ptolomies were erecting the Temple of Isis at Philæ. But the veil of mystery and oblivion hangs over the place. If there were parchments they have long ago faded, and if there were hieroglyphics they have worn away and left no trace.

The absence of rain in Egypt and the dry climate have left her ruins for centuries practically intact. But though the rains have pelted these ruins for unnumbered centuries they look equal to other centuries yet to come and bear evidence of a past civilization that is as yet a sealed book to us. We only know that here at Mitla and at other ruins in southern Mexico, are temples, pyramids and sepulchers whose builders are blotted from the earth, and the mystery makes them, perhaps, all the more fascinating.

Hours were spent in wandering from one apartment to another. There were open courts, long narrow rooms, panels in mosaic, small cut stones in diversfied arrangements, exquisitely done and fastened together with a rose-tinted material, woven in the most intricate patterns.

There were no representations of still life, no shapes of human beings, bird, beast or reptile, on any of the main

buildings. But on some old walls attached to stables near by were some paintings nearly obliterated by time and the moisture on the crumbling stucco, which were Egyptian in character, and a few outlined figures, seemingly out of place and probably the work of some late amateurs.

Science and research are solving the mysteries of buried temples and tombs in Egypt, in Asia and other countries, but so far nothing has been accomplished towards solving the mystery that enshrouds these ruins, the most priceless remains of all ruins, and of an ancient civilization, yet found upon our continent—so archæologists consider them; and fully impressed with what men of science have told us, and doubly impressed with what I saw and felt, the toil and worry of travel fell away from me as I stood upon the wide stone platform in front of the Hall of Monoliths, and gazed upon the broken stones and piles of rubbish heaped here and there.

A Christian church and a cemetery were above me, and below was the Indian village. I turned and glanced into the sanctuary behind me, and felt for a moment as if the robed priests might return and finish their prayers. Then I went through the barren halls once more, and then the church bell rang out and I knew that the earth was purged from its old idolatries; that no more the priests came to their long forgotten altars. They left these enduring monuments, but nothing is left to tell of their incantations, their sacrifices or manner of worship. Where are they, the tribes of other days?

> "Did the dust of these fair solitudes once
> stir with life
> And burn with passion?"

I felt the ineffable pathos of the Mitlan ruins, over which hangs a tender, brooding silence and sadness that is too hopeless for consolation. In the twilight the subtle mystery of the place weighed upon me. A pale moon hung over the lonely field of ruins, barren, except where a few trees grew along the brink of a shallow, sandy stream, wherein were a

RUINS, MITLA.

few pools, and with barely enough water to ripple silently and stealthily about the stepping stones. A few palms and bananas waved in the warm night air. The desolate plain rolled back to equally desolate-looking hills. What space, what mystery, what memories!

The ruins massive and calm were a fitting picture for the pale moon-tinted background, a picture of unsolved solemn things. Lio-baa—"the place of the tombs"—was well named in the long ago, and the Mitla of today means a place of sadness, a resting place for the dead. For me it was a place that enthralled me, that took possession of my imagination, and speculation was rife.

One cannot help but wonder, and think of what has been; of the race of men who built these temples—for what purpose we know not—all that might give light upon them is gone. Only these stones remain that do not cry out, are silent and tell not, of them who once lived, who have perished and are as naught, "neither have they any more, a portion of anything that is under the sun."

In an ineffable repose the fields from which the corn had been gathered lay gleaming, a brownish yellow in the moonlight, and the rays of the moon shone on the fallen broken walls, and lay on the white dusty road that led me from them to the hotel, to the crisp vital air of the present.

After I had slept a few moments, it seemed to me, the glory of a new morning trailed across the mountains and down into the tawny valley, that lay cradled between the mountain ranges. I was getting accustomed to sunrises in Mexico. Almost before it was light, my breakfast was

served in a room facing the court, as were all the rooms, which open on the one great court filled with trees and flowers.

The stables were on one side, the poultry anywhere, and cats everywhere. Six hungry cats watched me, while the barefooted Indian garcon, in an abbreviated shirt and shrunken cotton knee pants, brought my breakfast which consisted of bread, coffee, and eggs. There was plenty of salt, but butter—"the fruit of the full-blown cow"—is unknown in Mitla, as in many other places in Mexico.

But I did not complain. There was an open well in the court near me. It was deep and dark, and I was there alone in a place where not one word of our language, and only an imitation of French was understood. So what was the use of complaining? I simply ate what I wanted, gave the rest to the cats, left the well where it was, and started out on a still hunt for kodak pictures of the Indians.

There is a race of Indians in Mitla unlike any others in Mexico. Their customs and language are different from the others further north, though to my surprise I found they understood a few words of French. They live in houses made principally of mud, straw and cornstalks. Their corn was gathered and piled in the huts, which have but one room. How they live and eat and sleep is a mystery, in such limited quarters.

I saw one man who was ill, stretched out on the bare floor, close to the corn, leaving just enough space for his wife to walk to the heap and help herself to her daily bread. His pillow was of stone. If he had a blanket or serape I did not see one.

They sleep inside or outside the huts on earthen floors, and make their clothing, spinning the wool or cotton by twirling a small wooden stick, much as one spins a top. Their blankets and rebosos or mantles they weave on queer, hand-made looms, one end being fastened to a tree or post, the other tied about the waist of the weaver.

The women's dress consists of a short skirt, and a chemise, the yoke and sleeves of the latter being invariably made of knitted or crocheted lace, and were to me wonderfully white, when I consider that the pools in the so-called river were the only washing places. The mahogany-colored arms and necks

against the white garments, perfect as to contour and color, were artistic and picturesque, and from the young maiden to the wrinkled old hag, there were always to be seen a string of coral beads around the neck. I felt that Fred had made the mistake of his life in not accompanying me to Mitla.

Theirs is a life of monotony and toil. The mills of the gods that "grind exceedingly small"—to use the phrase to fit the occasion—have not even in the palmy days of a superabundance of made-to-order gods found an abiding place in Mitla.

Ceres, however, has many representatives. Though these dusky goddesses are not worshipped, they should be, for they are the mills, and grind exceedingly small—the corn into paste for the daily fare. They also gather the tiny brushwood fagots for the fire and carry the water from the river. A life of hardship and toil is theirs and has been from time immemorial, but there is a saving grace in the fact, that beyond their own borders they know nothing; of what goes on in the great world they have not the slightest knowledge. And verily here, "where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

CHOCOLATE DROPS.

The huts are enclosed by the cactus hedges, and the yards are filled with chickens, dogs and children. The children were shy as quail, and I found it rather difficult getting kodak pictures; but I have a number of pictures representing the people and their surroundings; also some of the unclothed cherubs who forgot shyness when the coveted centavos were offered them. They will remind me of Mitla

when the strange babel of tongues, the ways and customs of these untaught children of nature will be memories, just as the memories of those massive ruins lying on the dreary plain left from bygone centuries will be mine.

Silent they are. No voice from the past tells their secrets. No tools are left or means to show how they were formed or placed. There are no heartbeats from the world clicking over telegraph wires. No trolley-cars whirl by to disturb the old town of half a dozen houses. The ruins lie in utter isolation, and the sun beats down mockingly upon their carved and sculptured temples.

I gathered my few belongings and was rather thankful when I left the cell-like room whose heavily-barred doors and windows made it seem more like a prison than any place I had ever occupied. Felicity gleamed in the eyes of the old Don when I paid for my prison rates. Not many go to that out-of-the-way place, where life is purposeless and slow, and is not for the average tourist.

But the mocking-birds and parrots shrilled their sharp notes as I departed, and a brilliant flower given me with a shy, sweet grace by one of the Indian maidens, sweet as the flower from the cactus that points toward the glowing sky, spoke of life and hope amid utter desolation. Buenos noches.

FRANK.

XXVI

"But just tonight, my darling,
I would give the world that we
Might be singing old songs together,
With your head upon my knee."

Aileen, dear, I have not written to Edith of my troubles. She thinks I am happy. Let her enjoy her wanderings without the knowledge of my misery to oppress her. When she returns, and I hope it will be years hence when I am happier or dead, will be time enough for her to know. I shall tell her of the little mound under the daisies. I can write now that the first hurt is over, and I can say to you, my guide, my counselor, that I cannot grieve for her, my dead baby, any longer. I could not bear to think of her growing to womanhood and perhaps suffering as I have. In all my grief and loneliness I think of what might have been her fate. Her father's blood was in her veins, and she might have grown like him. "Sheltered in my home," Edith wrote.

Well, I learned before many months after my child was gone that the grief I endured, the storm of emotions were only as the mildest zephyrs compared to those within the place I knew as home, which I endured from the man I called my husband, that left me racked and broken on memory's wheel—fate's plaything and helpless toy. I could not come to you and look in your dear, sympathizing eyes, while I told you a little of my life. I shall write an outline that you may know, and knowing am sure of your love and sympathy. I have given you an idea from time to time of my happiness, my sorrow—and later of my fears and distress regarding Bert's actions and indifference. That anything so dreadful as the reality could have occurred, was further from my mind than any inconceivable thing imagined, or felt, in the wildest, most horrid of dreams. Bert came in late one evening in evident distress. He was pale and suffering beyond all doubt, yet I forbore questioning him while yearning for his confi-

dence. I could not force it by asking, and with the thought of repulse also. Finally he seated himself by my side, took my hand and said:

"Ruth, I know you have thought me a brute lately, and I have not treated you as I should, poor little woman!"

The ready tears filled my eyes; it seemed as though my heart would burst. I felt in the moment that I had wronged him, that I had not understood, and oh the thrill of happiness that swept over me at the mere thought of a return of old conditions, of loving and the idea of being loved, petted and caressed as I had been for some blissful months after we were married.

Then he went on in detail to say that though he hated to pain me, he felt he must seek comfort and advice, and find solace in my affections, which he had never for a moment doubted. He said that he had a cousin, a beautiful young lady, whose father and mother had died when she was quite young. She had passed her life in a distant city in a convent until the past year, and she was now in the city. He asked me if I would receive her.

"Why do you seem so troubled? Do you think I would not do anything within the bounds of reason for you or yours?" I said.

"Ah, that is the question," he answered. "You may not think it within the bounds of reason when I tell you that I have been worried lately to a greater degree than you can imagine. The poor child, while under the influence of wine which was given her at a dinner, was led to believe she had been married to a man. She had never taken wine before, and was easily overcome by it. In time she learned of the deception practiced, and loving the man with her whole soul, even though she felt that he had forfeited every right to her love and respect, the shock was so great that for weeks she has been ill, almost at the point of death. She is somewhat better now, but hopeless. I have spent a great deal of time doing what I could do to alleviate her distress. But while hoping that when she grew better, she would forget her sorrowful experience and perhaps her love, it seems she can do neither one nor the other. I have feared that her mind

would succumb to the terrible strain or that she might commit suicide, and at last I decided to come to you and ask your counsel."

A wave of sorrow and pity for my poor boy seemed to shut out the troubles of the girl for the time being, then I said:

"Where is the man? Why do you not find him and demand that he make restitution?"

A peculiar look showed in his eyes for an instant which startled me.

"That is why I wanted to talk to you on the subject," he replied. "If you will consent to receive her—and she needs a woman's kindness—we will take her and go to our seaside home. When she is with us I shall have no fear but restitution shall be hers. I will make it the object of my life to see to it. All I desire now is your co-operation, and I have tried to think and plan for the best, but while I disliked asking or to trouble you about me or my relatives, I know not which way to turn except to you. It hurts me to think of her in her sorrow, with no one to care or sympathize with her."

"Why, Bert, darling, did you think me so heartless that you have hesitated? If you only had told me, I would have been spared a great deal of pain, and we could have arranged for your cousin. I will do all in my power to assist you in any possible way."

"I thought you would do so, and now my plan is this: We will go to our house at Monterey—there are only Japanese servants there, you know. She will come with us and remain there until the child is born."

"And then what will be done?" said I.

"We will have ample time to make plans. But now we must do the only possible thing to save her reputation. I have worried over this affair until I have been driven to desperation, and I have only one hope, and that is in your wisdom and counsel. I have thought of a thousand ways and have been met by a blank wall except when I thought of you. I know your goodness, your purity—know how your sensitive nature will revolt at the thought of having to endure what is before you, but, oh, Ruthie! for God's sake,—

for the sake of your little one—be merciful, help me to straighten out the tangle without publicity, for the sake of my name and reputation."

"Your name and reputation? How need it affect you?"

"How could I endure that a relative of mine should be left helpless and homeless, with the possibility of the public becoming aware of the relationship? I have been driven almost insane lately as to what was to be done; I know, however, you, who have been a mother, will understand."

A wave of sorrow for my poor Bert seemed to shut out the other revelation for the time, and my one thought was to comfort him. I shall hurry on to tell you that we talked far on in the night, making arrangements for our departure. My health was to be the excuse for our going, and also the isolation of ourselves from our friends for a time. I preceded him a day or two, had the house put in order, and then he came, bringing Alice—Mrs. Bertram as she was to be called.

She was beautiful beyond my power to express to you. A wealth of auburn hair waved in fluffy masses away from a dimpled, babyish face. Her eyes were large and of a violet blue that had such a wistful, appealing look that my heart went out to her in her helpless beauty. I cannot endure the thought of giving you in detail all that followed; it is like a knife in my heart, even now as I write.

The days passed. Bert was very kind to me, yet entirely unlike the husband I had known, when we were newly wed. Much of his time was spent with Alice—she was very timid and helpless, and he was solicitous as to her health and also to keep her from grieving, he said, too much over the absence of the man she adored. He would come to me often with words of praise and appreciation for my help for him and his.

"I think no other woman in the whole world would be so sweet, so self-sacrificing as you are, Ruthie, dear," he once said. "Bear up bravely, dear; it won't be a great while longer now!"

And my foolish heart was throbbing with happiness at his words of praise. I felt that ere long, when satisfactory

arrangements had been made, that we two would be all the happier in our love for helping an unfortunate soul in her loneliness and grief.

Time passed, and one evening I had announced my intention of going to the house of a poor neighbor to see about some sewing that was being done, saying I should be away an hour or more, probably. I had not gone far before I thought of some work Alice had spoken of sending, so I returned hastily and was about to enter her room, when I heard Bert's voice. I stood near the portieres, the door was open, and the room I was in being rather dark, I was not observed. Then I heard Alice say:

"I cannot live this life much longer, loving you with my whole soul. I cannot endure the presence of that other woman who is your wife in the eyes of the world. Something must be done and soon, or I shall not answer for the consequences. Why did you bring me here to torture me?"

"I thought it best—in fact the only way until I can arrange for the future. At present it is safer for both of us here."

"I know you are doing what you think is best, and you know too well that I love you so much that I cannot dream of life without you."

And she threw herself in his arms, and he, bending over, held his mouth against hers in a desperate kiss. Then he pushed her head back and kissed her white throat that gleamed like marble in the dusk of the room, with a passionate intensity I knew only too well even in that moment of agony he had never bestowed upon me, and the thought struck me to the quick. Then he held her close to his heart.

"My love, my life!" he murmured, as he caressed her. "Wait a little longer, and all will be well when you are stronger, and the child is older."

In some unaccountable way, in that dreadful moment, I thought of Lot's wife, who, while fleeing, had turned, her woman's heart pleading for one last look toward her loved home, stricken in the instant, because of her love, as I had always explained to myself, so I, the dupe, was stricken, helpless, rigid, unable to move, holding on to the portieres.

How long I stood there—moments, minutes, or hours, I know not, for a lifetime seemed to pass before me. I have heard that the events of a lifetime flash with lightning rapidity before the mental vision of a drowning person. So in the brief space of a moment—as I fancy it was—incidents of my life, of the moment especially when I first looked in Bert's face and loved him; of his wooing, his tenderness and love; our marriage and the heaven filled days that followed, came to me—and then a sharp pang like a knife struck me as the thought of my dead babe—his child, too!—wrung my heart.

The horrible truth in all its hideousness dawned upon my dazed senses. The fraud practiced upon me struck home with all its sickening reality, and I fell senseless through the portieres and into the room where they sat in fancied security.

Later in the evening I awoke in my own room with my maid bathing my brow, and with the thought that something terrible had happened.

"What is the matter? What are you crying about?" I asked.

"I thought you were dead or dying," she sobbed, "and I have been so frightened."

"But why?" I said, impatiently. "Can't you explain?"

"Your husband was in the front chamber with Mrs. Bertram when you fell through the door as if you were dead. The master carried you into your own room and called me. He seemed terribly distressed and frightened. So was Mrs. Bertram. She cried and wrung her hands and said she was sure you knew all. I do not know what she meant. But you are not going to die. I will take good care of you and you will soon be well."

While she talked memory asserted itself, and I recalled every word I had heard. It was as though they had been burnt upon my heart, and I moaned in the depths and intensity of an agony I had not thought it possible to endure. I told her to go into my sitting-room and lie down a while and let me sleep. After a while she left me, and I was alone with a grief that was appalling.

I was on the borderland between reason and madness. Reason told me to go away, to fly to some far-off region and

save myself while it was yet time to do so. Then a very whirlwind of passion and hate swept reason from its throne, and once I found myself with a revolver that Bert had left in the room, in my hand, and I was stealing out in the hall with murder in my heart. There was fire in my veins and fire in my heart; my blood surged and clamored for revenge. I had passed from the passive state to one of vivid energy. I was demoniacal. Mind and body seemed to burn with but one thought, one desire—that was to take the life of the woman who had stolen my husband away from me.

A life for a life was right and just, I believed. Why not have the satisfaction of revenge for my wrecked life? As in a vision I saw Judith with the head of Holofernes, and then a figure in white with a ghastly face stared at me from the opposite side of the wall; the staring eyes and dishevelled hair struck terror to my heart. I retreated from the vision. Then all at once I realized that it was myself I saw in a mirror. I returned to my own room, locked the door, and looked at myself earnestly. Could this woman be myself? The drawn, pallid face; the eyes with such a terrible expression.

Was I mad? Was I a murderess? Had I already committed a crime that would send me from the man I loved and bar the gates of heaven from me? Ah, no, I had not committed a crime. I could not do it. I must wait. Perhaps my husband would come back and love me as he once had. He surely had not forgotten every tie so soon. And then again the thought of how I had been duped roused me to a realization of the insult brought upon me—and in my home—to shield the guilty.

Again it was forced upon me that it would be only just that she should suffer. Then a soft whisper seemed to sound in my ears. "Thou shalt not kill" flashed through my numbed brain, and I bowed before the mandate and struggled for hours on my knees, praying, pleading, asking for help, for strength to do what was right. "God, oh God," I prayed, "let not this burden be greater than I can bear. Help me stay my hand lest the sin of murder stain my soul and leave me more wretched if possible than now."

My dear, my dear! Heaven grant that you may never for one moment feel the hurt, the terror, the overwhelming tide of sorrow, that drove me wild and made murder seem possible and almost right at times during that dreadful night.

I looked back at my life that had been so happy—the sorrow I had when my child was taken from me seemed so slight that it did not strike me as grief. All the while I seemed to be whispering to myself, "Thank God, she is at rest."

If she had lived she would have known and grieved over her mother's sorrows and would have scorned her father. I could not have endured to see her shamed and humiliated, so I struggled against the irresistible impulse, that time and time again made me long to take the loaded weapon and go out and kill her, the serpent that had entered my home, who made life for me a thing not worth living.

I was adrift on an ocean of misery—tossed high upon grief's full tide, not caring where I might drift, and incapable at the time for action. The night wore on, a light wind fanned the curtains of my window, cool, sweet and refreshing. I arose from my knees. Weak and weary I reached the window and, sinking down on the seat, I looked out on the sand dunes lying white under the pale light. The waning stars burned faintly against a gray sky. The waters of the bay lay gleaming beyond the undulating shore and a faint murmer came like muffled drums. The waves beating up in sullen monotony, ever and ever, yes, and forever, I thought, the tide will ebb and flow—and the days ahead of me! Why, I am young yet, and life can be so long when one is wretched and does not care for it.

Then I looked toward the East and saw a vague but certain promise of the dawn. I heard the far-off baying of a dog, ending in a long, wailing sound that seemed a cry of pain. Two figures stole noiselessly through a fringe of trees lining the road that led toward the station. A low, empty laugh startled me; it sounded like a taunt, and the thought struck me, "why, are you here? Perhaps she is laughing at you even now."

I stood up for a moment, dazed and uncertain. The whole of the black night seemed like an evil dream. I saw my untouched bed; noiselessly I stole to the outer chamber and saw my maid quietly sleeping. I looked out into the hall; the house was quiet; Bert's room was dark, and further on was her closed door.

Memory plays strange tricks at times, and why at that particular moment a scene of my early childhood should come before me, I know not. I shivered as though looking into an open grave. I saw myself and another little girl playing. I knew that I was displeased about something and that I said to her:

"Go and keep yourself unclean and spotted from the world."

I had not seen or heard of the little playmate for years, and though memory was indistinct about her, I remembered her name was Alice. That was the only name I recalled. But my mother's gentle reproof and her tender words had left a deep impression on my mind, when I was teasing my kitten and singing lustily, "Don't talk about suffering here below."

Some psychic influence was about me. My mother, dead for long years, seemed to lay her hand on my head, and a whispered message seemed to strike me with a gentle force. "Ere the day dawns, go, abide not here!" And in that moment it was plain to me that I must indeed, if I would retain my self-respect.

"Go." Hastily but silently I placed a few things in a bag, and stole out of the house in the gray dawn and hurried to the station. I knew there was a train that would take me away, and I hastened, terror-stricken, fearing that I might be missed, or that Bert would awaken early, and come with some explanation to me, and would find I was not in my room.

I scarcely arrived before the train came and I found myself in a seat, breathless with dread for a moment; then the sound of the bell ringing and the puffing of the engine told me that I was safe for the present at least. I felt relieved for a moment.

Then the thought came to me, "you are needlessly alarmed, perhaps. How do you know that Bert wants you?" Why should he, indeed? I was nothing to him, I knew, and I said to myself, "You have been used as a shield and are only a wife in name—another woman has your husband's heart; you have no longer the right to be there," and neither have I the desire, I also thought.

So, like a guilty, hunted creature, I went back to town and drove home in a closed carriage. I met the inquiry of the startled servants with the simple statement that I was ill and in need of my family physician. "And the master?" "He would also return soon," I said. Why I made the remark, I know not, only in my confused state of mind I scarcely knew what to say.

I can recall but little that happened during the next few days; only dim recollections of the kind old doctor, and the gentle care of a nurse, until one evening when I saw Bert sitting by my bed. He was pale and looked worried. For a moment I did not realize what had happened or why there was such a heavy weight on my heart that seemed to be smothering me. I must have looked strange to him, for he cried:

"Don't look at me so strangely, Ruthie dear. It is Bert."

"Oh!" I gasped, "is it you? And why you of all men in the world? Why should you be here in my room, where you have no right after what has happened? Are you more brute than man that you should dare to come to me with the kisses of that woman fresh on your lips, with the slime of a disgusting, deceitful liason clinging to you? I could never have believed it possible, that the man I loved could have fallen so low—could have become so debased or put me in the position to be insulted and wronged beyond the power of telling."

"Do not say the man you loved; hear me, listen to me until I tell you all. By your love you shall judge me. Love like yours cannot die in a moment. I followed you here as soon as I learned at the station that you had left on that morning after"—he paused and went on: "I would not see or talk to you until you were better, and now if you will only

hear me, surely you will forgive. I am weak and have sinned against you, but it was not intentional. When you did not care to go out before your child was born—now be quiet. Do not sob so bitterly," he said. For at the mention of the dead baby he had, I noticed, said "your child," not ours.

"Now, hear me patiently as possible. I used to go out alone as you know, and one day met Alice at the house of a friend. She was just out of school and very unhappy in the home of her adopted parents. She had no friends and the old people were very stern. I will not weary you. She rode or walked every day. Their home was across the bay near the foot of Mount Tamalpais—if you remember I was there for a few days. They were to send her to Europe and one day in San Francisco I saw her. She had escaped the vigilance of her companion, a woman she detested. I will not harrow your feelings, but I was tempted and fell. And when the truth as you know it became evident, and she, wild and terrified as to the future, pleaded with me to assist her in keeping the secret of her life from the public, I was as terrified as she. I went to you—you know the rest. I was obliged to keep up the farce and pretended to love her until I could get her away. You overheard me, I suppose, but I come to you asking you to forgive me and love me a little. It was her idea to tell you of the supposed relationship, and that the child should be born in our home, so that I could eventually adopt it. And now, while she is heartbroken at the idea of leaving, she will go away. This she had been talking of—you probably did not hear all, and that was a farewell that you witnessed. I promised anything to pacify her. She will go where you will never see her if you will agree to adopt the boy."

"And she is heartless enough to give up the child and you?"

"Yes," he said, "we have so agreed if you will come back with me. Perhaps in time you may forgive me and forget all except the child is mine and learn to love him."

For hours he talked and pleaded with me; all the old time love seemed mine once more. He was so penitent, tender and loving. He said that when I was well enough if I would

only return with him—for he would not go back without me—we would dismiss the servants and go away for a time by ourselves, and Alice would sail for the Orient.

I cannot tell you all that followed, only that he conquered me completely. For, try as I would, struggle as I did, against my better judgment I agreed to his wishes, for I loved him, God help me! knowing all, yet forgiving all.

We had a few quiet days, happy days when it seemed to me that life might be worth while, when the past could be lived down, if not forgotton. And my heart went out constantly to the poor child whose mother was so willing to leave it. I longed to hold it in my arms and see the child that would soon be motherless. So one day Bert asked me if I was strong enough to travel. When I hesitated he said, "You need not see her, but go with me; then the arrangements can be quickly and satisfactorily made."

So, between hope and fear the journey was made. We arrived late in the evening and went at once to our rooms. He kissed me and said, "Rest well tonight, and all will be arranged for us tomorrow."

I was restless and could not sleep, but would not open Bert's door to disturb him. The thought of the horrors of that last night spent here was tugging at my throat, choking me, and my heart was beating so wildly that it made me afraid.

Once in the night I heard the dismal yelp of a coyote—and a faint, feeble wail nearer, came from the nursery. The little boy—his boy! was crying. My heart warmed at the thought of the little helpless being, and I thought very soon I would console and soothe it with tenderest care.

Toward dawn I fell asleep and wakening with a start I dressed hurriedly. The breakfast bell rang before I left my room. Hastening down I went into the dining-room and was almost paralyzed to see Alice sitting in my place pouring out the coffee for my husband.

"I thought the air was not good for your health, and that you had gone back to San Francisco for a more even climate. It is pleasant to know you have changed your mind and are back again," she said, in her soft, insinuating voice.

I turned to Bert. "Sit there," he said, pointing to a seat at the side of the table. "Alice will keep the seat she has in the future."

"And so it was for this—to doubly insult me that you brought me here?" I said.

"It was to straighten out some complications which we will discuss after breakfast," he replied. "So be kind enough to eat and do not make a scene before the servants."

I turned and went out, so blinded by pain and misery that I did not know what to do or where to go. Only one idea was in my mind, and that for some reason I had been inveigled into coming back. I felt I must have time to think. Solitude was my wish. I must get away. I went on until I found myself upon a crag overhanging the bay. Tortured by fears and with the thought of that woman sitting in my place, with the query that insulted my womanhood, my right to be in my own home, for it was mine and not my husband's; yet he evidently sanctioned the insult; lost in my own miserable thoughts, I was brought to myself by Bert's voice.

"I have come to find you and have a full and complete understanding, Ruth."

"It is time, I think," I said.

"Yes, it is time, and the time is now. I will speak freely to you. I thought I loved you, Ruth, when I married you. I had never cared for another until I met you, and so was happy with you until I met Alice. Then indeed I knew what love was! I know now it is my very life. I love her as no man ever loved woman before, and, loving her as I do, nothing in heaven or on earth can separate us but death."

"You forget to mention one place," I said. "Hell would be more in your line and hers also, I fancy. And let me say to you, as sure as there is a just God in heaven, and I know there is—one who looks with pitying love upon the helpless and the wronged—just so sure as you live and she lives, there will be more of hell than heaven on earth for you two. All that you have made me suffer will return to you in some way."

"We will not discuss that now. What I want to say is this. You received me in the city—you lived with me as your

lawful husband. You condoned my offense—therefore you are in no position to dictate. I will tell you what you are to do. Nearly all your property is mine by marriage. You cannot get a divorce for you have condoned my offense. Alice wants to go away and will not take the child. If you will keep it and care for it, I shall make ample allowance for you and the boy. You can go where you like, and do what you please. Only you are not to trouble me. As to my future life, I shall take care that you will not have an opportunity to trouble me further. Alice and I leave on different trains today. You can stay here as long as you like or go where you choose—this house is at your disposal, and there will be money at the bank for you."

"You are kind," I said, "to offer money of my own to me, but I have money, thank heaven, you know nothing about. I will make a gift to you—you can live on the money you obtained when you married me—I will accept nothing from you."

"As you choose," he said. "But we waste time. I am going to see Alice off by the first train and will see you again."

So he left me there with the great gray waste of waters stretching on and on to infinity. I tried to imagine what life would be without him. If he were dead, then I might mourn for him, might hope for a reunion beyond this life. But to live on in the same world, knowing that another woman had his heart, the one with the fair baby face, but cruel as the grave. And though he loved her, somehow, I could not believe he had her heart. There was something my woman's intuition discovered. Beneath the fair exterior was a false and unstable nature. Else why could she leave the helpless child whose father adored her.

The future was not to be thought of now. The present in all its dreadful reality must be faced. I could not throw myself into the seething waters below me and end it all, for I could not be sure that it would end all for me.

What if it were as some teach that nothing can die or cease to exist—that new forms and new life spring ceaselessly from the decay which we with our earthly senses per-

ceive,—that all humanity, in fact everything, lives again and yet again in some shape or other. If so, why not try to endure it here, and make the best of the poor broken life possible. If our thoughts and actions do not end on the earth plane, but in that otherwhere to which we must go, we will find ineffaceable records, it surely were worth while to try to do what is right according to one's understanding. If by being true to myself and my early teachings I could raise myself in the scale and not lower myself as I would if I had—as I thought to do in my frenzy that terrible night and committed murder and shut the gates of heaven from me forever.

Again the words "Thou shalt not kill" seemed to be ringing in my brain—then it must mean neither myself or another. I must bear my sorrows as best I could, bereft of life's best gift—hope. For I knew in all its intensity and fervor that I who had been a wife and mother had lost all the hopes, the dreams of life, of youth, of love, that make earth seem so like heaven.

So my thoughts ran on and on until I knew no more, and it was weeks before I became conscious of what was going on around me. Gradually as I became better I learned that Bert had left on the afternoon when they found me later, unconscious on the beach. No word had come from him since that day.

But the baby had grown wonderfully in the few weeks, and one day they brought him to me. His father's boy, indeed! Surely there was never so great a resemblance between a man and a tiny mite of humanity as I saw in him. I took him in my arms, saw his face dimple with laughter while his tiny hands grasped my hair which hung loosely about my face. My heart seemed to expand in sudden joy. I kissed and cried over him, so like the Bert I knew, and in that moment I knew also, God help me! that I not only loved his child, but that with all the misery he had heaped upon me, the humiliation, treachery, deceit, and indifference, that in my soul I still loved him!

RUTH.

XXVII

"With me in my untraversed wilds and caves,
My kingdom unexplored, you will read the book
Of Nature that unclasp'd lies, while the winds
Mesmeric as the fingers of your love
Will turn the living leaves as you read on."

It has been said that Mexico is superior to Italy in landscape effects, which is certainly true, Jack. This country is so large and so diversified that it can scarcely be compared to Italy. The immensity of it, the deserts and mesas, the high mountains that, even in the tropics, are covered with perpetual snow, the plateaus and tierra caliente or hot lands give inexhaustible subjects for the writer or artist.

I could fill pages in describing the country from the Mitla region back to Puebla and on to Jalapa. Its products, mode of tilling the soil, the scenery that charms with its kaleidoscopic effects, from the tierra caliente to the higher tablelands, are varied and wonderfully interesting. There are landscapes as lovely and beautiful as are to be found anywhere in the world and the small but picturesque towns are pleasing, for something more than a saloon and a cigar stand is needed to constitute

A GROUP OF NATIVES OF MITLA.

a town in Mexico. No matter how small the place, one sees a church and a plaza. A man remarked to me: "We are never out of sight of a church in Mexico." He seemed rather disgusted with the number of churches seen.

"And you are never out of reach of a saloon at home," I replied. He seemed more used to the latter than the former I thought.

And then the man turned away with a withering have-the-last-word look and we both quietly heard the "wheels go 'round" as we sped along.

From Puebla we journeyed to Jalapa. And by the way, Jack, if you know the medicine called jalap and with no pleasing or tender memories, and call the town Halapa, which is correct, it will probably seem different and more enjoyable.

We passed on the way a fine agricultural country, and I saw for the first time some American cultivators used on the extensive farms, the magnitude of which would astonish some of our large land owners, unless they are aware of the fact that lands are not taxed in Mexico. In our sister Republic a man may have vast possessions and be at no expense, if he does not cultivate his acres. But if he is unfortunate enough to work for a salary, the Government insists on its right to a portion of it.

This was the best agricultural country I had seen, except in the Guadalajara division. There were vast wheat fields and the harvest of corn was abundant. Men in squads of eight or more, with great baskets on their backs, picked the ears and tossed them deftly over their heads into the baskets. An overseer on horseback was always in attendance, watching them work. It reminded me of stories of the old days of slavery.

Labor-saving machines are not much in evidence, and I wondered how a combined harvester and threshing machine would strike these people. The hardest and most laborious way seems the most favored. The same impression applies to a good many things throughout the country. I have found traveling in Mexico harder than in any country I have ever visited. The venders of enchiladas, tortillas, tamales

and the inevitable jugs of pulque are found at every station. All these are bought and eaten in the cars. That one slips on sticky tamale husks, banana and orange peelings is of small concern to the feeders, who seem to be always eating while traveling and is only a trifle of what one encounters in the way of odors while traveling.

Still I did not allow these things to disturb or distract my attention from the broad mesas or the grandly picturesque beauty of the mountains. I believe in adapting myself to circumstances. I was traveling in a land—if not "God's own country"—some portions of which are so near the threshold of Eden that minor affairs were nothing.

The natives ate when they could get anything to eat. And a green leaf held the tempting enchilada as well as a costly Sevres plate, and was always within reach of the dealer. They seemed to enjoy the delicacies, though I often went hungry. Enchiladas were not to be thought of, and the fruits were not always to my liking.

Some wretch suggested Welsh rarebit. Good cheese and real butter, with a few necessary concomitants thrown in would be acceptable I thought. I was not materially interested in the nationality of the sauce or rarebit, but wished for one that would taste as if I had made it myself—pure and simple, without sex, politics, or genealogical tree—well, there was something to live for, and look forward to, beyond the Tropic of Cancer and the Rio Grande.

We skimmed along over the cultivated lands, and entered a mountainous region. A torn and rugged old world greeted me. There were rocky steeps, black lava beds, and wind-swept trees.

We passed a forlorn old castle that was a fortress for the Spaniards, and a place of rest after the long toilsome climb up these mountains, over the road from Puebla to Vera Cruz. In this section the bandits once held sway and terrorized the country.

Then we entered a region where the fog holds everything in its moist embrace and found it was equal to some of Mount Tamalpais' show days. As we passed the fog belt, a cold wind drove the mist in foamy masses through the trees,

festooned with long gray mosses, waving ghost-like, as we sped through narrow cuts and curved around projecting stone abutments. A tossed and tumbled sea of mist filled the cañons and it seemed as though the train was shooting straight out over those filmy depths that hid the world below. But the road was as substantial as the scenery was unreal.

Soon we left the fogs and the sun came out clear and bright as we neared Jalapa, showing in the clear light wonderful vistas of plain and mountains. Glimpses of mirage-haunted distances were had through the tangled growth of wood. Far below was an undulating country with the shimmering green fields of sugar-cane. Rivers and lakes gleamed through a whitish mist. Great red flowers flashed a bright welcome amid the wealth of verdure, for we were once more in the heart of the tropics.

Vines with wine-tinted flowers fluttered in the winds like vivid butterflies. A bit of an old tumbled-down, broken wall, a ruined temple high above some trees, completed a picture that memory will ever hold dear. And then I found myself in quaint Jalapa.

A street car, which runs semi-annually, or semi-daily, was not in evidence when I left the train, but a peon took my small belongings and we started for the hotel, which was nearly a mile away. There were no conveyances of any kind for the traveler, so Jalapa is no place for gouty or rheumatic people. Being by nature rather averse to carrying my own, or the burdens of other people, I gladly shifted the responsibility of mine and let the brown man attend to the transportation. Thus we went through the tortuous streets, whose paving seemed to have been left in an unrestored condition since the invasion.

It is, however, worth all the aches and pains one endures in walking the rough streets, for in many places, sidewalks are unknown, as I found later on in wandering through the old town.

Once out of sight of the street car line one seems to belong to centuries past. The twentieth century is forgotten, and one is transported to the sixteenth century. The iron-barred

windows, old gray walls that shut in many a charming home, red-tiled roofs with queer water spouts projecting over the narrow walk gave me a glimpse of other days and other ways than ours.

One might wander far over the world and not find a fairer place than Jalapa, with its architectural traces of the Castilian, the quaintly odd projecting balconies, attractive with bright draperies, and doubly so when one catches a glimpse now and then of some beautiful senorita peering through the curtains.

Pictures of old Castilian days haunted my mind. Away from the "Limited," with none of the stop-over privileges of our country, imagination, however, has privileges in this tropical region, where cloistered nooks and still nights drug the senses into a forgetfulness of the seething, jostling world, where lives are thrown away in the restless tumult and flying spume of an existence, that is lived so rapidly that few men get acquainted with themselves.

Not so do the people live down here in the tropics. They live lives vibrant with human passion, if not the hurried and vigorous life of the colder regions. The days are not so filled with toil that the nights do not play an important part in the lives of the men here. The bandits of other days are gone, but the barred windows are staunch and firm and here in the entrancing, fragrant evenings, the lover stands outside and pleads his cause in soft, low music, or patiently waits for a glance at the fair one behind the curtains, for the women of the better class are given but little freedom, and so the lover serenely paces back and forth under the senorita's balcony, content with a word or a glance.

There are no hours spent with the adored one, wandering along lanes and amid scenes of tropical bloom and fragrance, where the very atmosphere breathes of love and its sweetness. Amid this mystery of color and ravishing beauty, one feels that a bit of Paradise, of bloom, tranquility and radiance has escaped, and found a resting place upon the eastern slope of Meniltepec.

The mists that usually hover over the place were dispelled by the warm sunlight, which overspread the whole scene like

a sea of blessing. I absorbed it, and with an inertia of peace I was soothed and rested. The senses were filled with rapture. A great inflorescence of beauty that was purifying and uplifting was mine, for here where nature has been more than bountiful, her blessings must if they sink into the appreciative soul be a prayer and a benediction.

The natives seem a docile people, living close to nature, and appear to live unquestioning amid their poverty. Clinging to the warm, kindly earth, they eat of her gifts and live

GROUP OF WOMEN WASHING.

without much wear and tear of brains or a knowledge of the "strenuous life"—the phrase so dearly liked in our telephonic, telegraphic existence.

Here where climatic conditions produce perennial fruits and flowers, they have but little heed of the morrow. If the peon has his daily tortillas and the fruits he may have for the labor of gathering in so many places in the country, he will not quarrel with fate nor have nervous prostration in trying to keep pace with some other fellow who may wear a better sombrero or serape. He does not lie awake nights

thinking how he can earn another peso to buy a new dress or the latest in hats for his females.

They live close to nature—and also where nature shows her best and loveliest, yet I do not know that instinct finds the loftiest expression among these people. The beauty that exists in the soul of things, as some people have it, may be appreciated. They perhaps have a subtle sense of the beautiful; but knowing nothing beyond their environments, they cannot know or enjoy by contrast and are not thankful for the climate, which if it were negotiable, would be one of the unfailing resources of their land.

Aside from the unparalleled views one has from the beautiful plaza in Jalapa, the old town was full of interest to me. It was old before the conquests, and much of the mediæval style still clings to it, though the schools and colleges are of the best, and English is taught in the colleges, showing their appreciation of the value of the language, commercially if not otherwise.

I fully appreciated the uses and abuses that might befall one where ignorance is not bliss, for I escaped more by good luck than sense. The Bible says, "Let him that stole, steal" and all unwittingly I stole, and after the transaction finished the sentence—"no more." It was my first offense, ignorantly or otherwise, and I resolved that I would be more careful and that no more blunders were to be made in Mexico.

I entered a ticket office one day to inquire in my limited patois about a trip to a certain place, and while endeavoring to obtain information, found I was in the wrong place. It was the freight department I knew later. Not being able to get what I went for, I gathered up some sheets of brown paper, wrapped them around a small parcel, bowed to the "agente," and walked out. Just before the train started, I glanced idly at my parcel, and was horrified to find I had taken some of the way bills. "Ferrocarril de Jalapa a Cordoba," then "recibo," and "conseguatario"—that was all plain enough to me, beside a lot of unintelligible stuff. Then "estacion, kilogramos," etc., were easily deciphered, and I knew that I had taken the way bills by mistake. I did not want them—but knew not what to do. It was impossible

for me to explain. My knowledge of the language was limited. I did not know it well enough to confess. Besides, a vision of some of the prisons I had seen made me think they were not the most desirable places for rest and repose.

Only that morning I had seen a lot of prisoners escorted to their daily toil by the armed rurales. One poor fellow had but one leg, and went along with a piece of wood tied to the other knee, beating an accompaniment to the "ssh-ssh" of the sandals and bare feet of the others. If he were not exempt, how could I, in reasonable health and looking it, hope to escape were it known that I had stolen—and of course they would have so decided it—the way bills? The wandering Californian felt just then a yearning to be a homing pigeon, but, not being able to fly, the longing for home brought the desire to get out of the scrape. So I decided to keep quiet and say nothing, especially as I could not well do otherwise. But being guilty, I must needs return to the vicinity of the freight office.

I strolled leisurely back, and looking into the office, saw three men searching with nervous energy for something. A cold wave of fear enveloped me as the "agente" looked me square in the eyes. I returned the glance with greater interest than he knew, smiled or grinned—I know not which—bowed politely, and turning saw a policeman, who looked about ten feet high, standing by my side. The welcome word "Vamonos" was shrilled in my ears by the conductor and I, in plain English, found myself "all aboard," in the cars and speeding away from the place, happy because I had escaped a padlocked cell, yet miserable in possessing something I did not want, yet dared not return, for I was afraid of the consequences.

I met a gentleman while in the City of Mexico who was kept in prison four months through the influence of a certain official, who had this man imprisoned simply because the aforesaid official wanted a mine that had been in possession of the prisoner's family for eighty years.

The gentleman had been victorious, but it made me shudder when I knew that for no particular reason he had been deprived of his liberty for months. So considering that the

motive is the sin, I looked with an unbiased opinion upon the matter, judging myself not guilty, and am ready to return the souvenir way bills at a moment's notice when extradition papers are sent.

I must speak of the incomparable beauty of a trip to Coatepec and Teoceli, on a branch road that runs from Jalapa through superb scenery in the heart of tropical Mexico. Coatepec lies at the base of Orizaba, embowered in a wealth of beautiful verdure, while reaching far above in the blue sky is the peak forever white with glistening snow.

The place is beautiful and the luxuriance of the coffee, sugar, banana and pineapple plantations sent me into raptures. The quivering and shimmering heat waves over the vast illimitable stretches of field and hill, extending on and on until the imagination expanded and reveled in the infinite that was lost to the vision beyond the horizon's rim.

An adequate description is impossible of a scene that possessed a charm not easily explained in the magnificent landscape effects that lay around me. And over all, as Wordsworth saw and wrote of a picture was "The light that never was on sea or land."

From Teoceli I drove to a barranca where were some magnificent waterfalls that were utilized for an electric plant which supplied three cities (Jalapa one of them) with light. Great tree ferns and vines made the place beautiful. I went down a series of ladders or wooden steps four hundred in number, to the plant, which was operated by an American and owned by Americans. It will not be many years before the United States will be in evidence nearly everywhere in Mexico. The opportunities are great, and capital is not slow in realizing the fact.

Jalapa, though small, is a well-lighted city. And thinking of the well-lighted streets, my mind reverted to Puebla and Oaxaca, whose streets are as black as tunnels. A tiny point of light set in the middle of the streets, one for every block, gives all the illumination the streets have, and the initiated know that each light represents a lantern and a policeman in the vicinity. If a policeman deserts his post or is caught napping by someone, his lantern is stolen and he

is dismissed without further evidence. There is one comfort, however, in the system; the scarcity of light is made up by the one cheering fact that you know just where a policeman is when you want one.

A day was spent in visiting the barranca where the water of the falls leaps from a great height down into the depths below. The flumes which diverted the water to a useful purpose in no wise destroyed the beauty of the falls. The spell which the place cast upon me made it hard for me to leave. The machinery of that electric plant lying deep in the ravine seemed wholly out of place in this old land of

BARRANCA AT TEOCELI, NEAR JALAPA.

the Montezumas, where broken temples give evidence of ages gone by, of altars that smoked with sacrificial offerings, perchance at the time when Solomon was planning the foundation of the temple at Jerusalem.

Here the tribes saw the sacred fires, even as the children of Israel, when led by Moses the Meek, saw and followed the pillar of fire. Those who built Egypt's towering pyramids and fashioned the sad-eyed Sphinx which faces the desert wastes, might not have made eyes so filled with unutterable sadness could the builders and makers have looked

upon this beautiful land, a land that is bright and more beautiful than the long-sought-for Canaan.

The sound of falling waters, the tropical growth, unsurpassed by any I have ever seen, is here, and never-ending vistas show like enchanted land through aisles of trees whose branches are wreathed and entwined with festoons of vines. A sense of humility overpowered me as I gazed upon the great sweep of landscape that reared and stretched giant peaks skyward, while above all in majesty and towering strength, was Orizaba, seeming to support the vaulted dome of the Empyrean.

Tropical trees, plains checkered by plantations of sugar-cane, shine in the gorgeous mantle of tropical hues impossible to describe. Moss sways from limbs of the trees and thousands of bright orchids gleam amid the tangle of vines, and tropical luxuriance. A new world of trees and flowers to me, even with all our wealth of vegetation and bloom at home. Mingled light and shadows print mosaics beneath the boughs of the coffee groves and strange odorous woods. There are trees and blossoms of unimaginable fragrance that come to me with the summer odors, gorgeous in tropical luxuriance that revels through endless days and nights of eternal summer. The tropic of my dreams, dear friend, has opened its gates which have swung back on noiseless hinges, and the reality is more satisfying, more enchanting than dreams could picture. And now I am strolling through groves and over very real paths, amid the splendors of a tropical foliage and bloom I have never seen elsewhere in all my wanderings.

The mystic light that wavered and brooded in that great ravine built and fashioned by Nature at Orizaba's base cast its thrall upon me. I felt as I have when looking through the incense-laden air of some grand old cathedral. Only the latter means men's fashioning and place of worship. Down in the barranca one's whole being is awed and humiliated. The senses are overwhelmed, for Nature holds sway and this is God's place of worship. Adios.

FRANK.

XXVIII

"How could she know that in a man's busy existence an out-lived, burned-out love can become of no more consequence than the ashes of his pipe?"

The pathetic story of Ruth's heroic struggles to live and endure a sorrow that would have driven many women to desperation was not all told in one letter, Edith dear, but in many. From them I have pieced out a fairly clear idea of her humiliation and grief, which I have written you from time to time.

She is desolate and my impulses are to help her all I can. I have written her to send the child to me and I will see that it is well cared for. You know the house is large with only auntie and myself besides the servants. My old nurse will take good care of it; and I shall see that the truth is not known. I will say that I have adopted the child in order to avoid useless questions.

I will send a copy of a letter I have written her advising her to go as far away as possible from here. San Francisco is too closely connected with her sorrow for her to remain. She fortunately has money of her own which Bert was not aware of. It is in Government bonds and she can do as she wishes. She had kept it as a surprise for him some day. I hope you may see her if she crosses the Atlantic. You would be very good to her, for I know your kind heart better than anyone else.

I could not have dreamed that so much of the coarser element—the savage that brooks no opposition—lay in the nature of the civilized man. Bert Wilder, handsome, agreeable to his friends, a man whom the world—which judges from a business standpoint—calls "good," honorable so far as his dealings with his fellow men, yet in a matter of his passion and desires allowed nothing to swerve him from his purpose.

Knowing Ruth's terrible experiences and thinking of the twofold nature of the man, I recall a conversation we once

had regarding one's duties in life toward our fellow beings. He said in reply to an assertion made by me that insincerity was the bane of civilization, that he thought I was right.

"Hypocrisy is the canker, the gangrene of the soul. I abhor it. Do as near right toward people as you can. But it is better to be wise and take all the good you can out of life. 'Better never than late' is a good motto, so I try to grasp the best that comes my way while I am able to appreciate and enjoy."

This is the man who hated hypocrisy. He took no chances on uncertainty—it was the reality, the certainty, not the possibilities of life he sought. And as the result proved has made a wreck of one woman's life. Not for a noble object or purpose, but for one that sooner or later must of necessity not redound to his credit. And all for his own innate selfishness and vanity.

Ruth hearing nothing from her husband has asked me to see him and learn something of the woman who stole her husband from her. Ruth is now trying to gain strength in seclusion, but she cannot give up hope.

"I know he always liked you, dear Aileen, and perhaps you can influence him to give her up. He may yet get over his mad passion. If I knew it were for his good, if she could make a better man of him, I might better endure my life knowing he was happy."

Thus I wrote in reply: "Friendship costs more than anything else in this world, for sometimes it is necessary to sacrifice so much of the heart's desires upon the altar of friendship, upon whose lintel posts are the words in unmistakable characters, "Greater love than this hath no man than he lay down his life for a friend." And yet I say to you, my poor Ruth, greater love than this hath no woman, than she who perils her reputation for a friend. This I am willing to do for you. I will try if possible to win your husband away from his mad infatuation since you desire it. Yet though I feel the futility of it, I am none the less willing to make the effort. Should you gain your heart's best hope, I am wondering if you will be satisfied.

Could the old love be the same? Would not the serpent of distrust be ever in your soul? And for myself I wonder

how there can possibly be anything in your heart but contempt. I know there would be no particle of love left in my heart were I you. My nature commands a full and complete equivalent in return for what I give. But I know that we are not all alike, and knowing the poor wronged girl that you are, I will not falter nor count the cost, but would try with better courage if only I knew for certain that—

> "If you loved only what were worth your love
> Love were clear gain, and wholly well for you."

I miss you dear and can appreciate your loneliness, but we are all lonely—you among the hills, I here by the ocean's brink. Yet out of the loneliness and isolation of which you speak, good may come to the betterment of yourself. You can dwarf your soul, starve and stunt it as you could a flower or a shrub. But isolation does not necessarily mean starvation. At times it means rest, and I trust you are resting now mentally and physically, even while you are craving companionship and love. While it may not be according to your desires that you are forced to rely upon yourself, you have time to ponder, to think and get somewhat acquainted with your own nature, your real self, and you will, I think, realize that there is one victory worth the effort, one great battle to be won, the victory over self.

In your lonely moments you can concentrate your thoughts upon yourself. Cease to think of your loss, your sorrows. At least try to think, and hold fast to the belief, that your life is not to be utterly wrecked by the wickedness and injustice of another.

"Fret not thyself in any wise"—all depressing thoughts are injurious, all healthy thoughts are sweet. Therefore you must strive to accept your fate, contentedly as you can, for when you are contented you are nourished.

I know you want to do right and that is the only road to happiness. I think the best good one can do to others is to help them do their duty. Your first duty, however, is to yourself.

Each well-born soul must win what it deserves.

You can overcome—you can forget in time, remember that.

There is no chance, no destiny—not fate can circumvent or hinder or control

"The firm resolve of a determined soul."

Your one great thought and aim must be only this—to your own self be true. After a time you will conquer for yours is the better way. For you have been true and womanly in the midst of temptation most grievous and kept yourself from doing wrong. And now by conquering self, you can put aside the old and usher in the new life, wherein may be happiness and a wonderful power for good; for before this great grief came upon you you lived for one only.

Dear Ruth, cannot you try to hunt up your blessings, look upon the bright places, hunt for the warm sunny nooks. When you take your solitary walks, do not seek the damp, gloomy spots; there will be less of sighs in the warm, joyous sunshine. Life is short at best, even though the days are interminable to you. Shake off the gloom—go forth in the strength of your young life. Why not go to Italy and join Edith? I wish you could decide to go and while you are away I will do all in my power to right your wrongs.

I wish you would try the diversion of travel. Sometimes the greatest curse that can befall us is to be given our heart's desires. In times to come you may realize that which you deem the curse of your life may carry a blessing in its arms.

I would ask you to see and walk where some of earth's sorrowing ones have trod, where the great and good have left lasting testimonials also. I would ask you to pause for a time in that marvel—the Cathedral of Milan. Its forest of columns, its delicate frost-like tracery, its countless statues, and intricate patterns, of fruits, flowers and figures, will take you out of yourself, will draw your very soul away from the littleness of earthly things.

Above the triple doorways are some inscriptions. Over one of the entrances is a sculptured cross and there you will read: "All that which troubles is but for a moment."

And over another is the legend: "All that which pleases is only for a moment."

And over the great central entrance, you can also see the inscription: "That only is, which is eternal."

Let these things sink deep into your heart, dear friend. Cultivate the upward look, not downward, and your life will be richer and sweeter by self-renunciation. The thought of forgetting momentary troubles may not seem possible to you, but in the presence of past history, of peoples and nations, you will have scant time for thoughts of self.

In Rome you may pause a moment at Tasso's tomb and think of his life. Humiliated; slighted; of his woes and wrongs; and you will think I know also of how much richer is the world for his having lived. You may go along the shining road that leads to Ostia some quiet afternoon, and, as the sun sinks in the west, you will muse on the vicissitudes of time; you will think that over this road passed Saul of Tarsus; or loiter along the Via Sacre where Cicero and Horace have walked.

You may stand on the Palatine Hill, where Cæsar fell, and look down upon the Colosseum, and visions of unnumbered martyrs will rise before you who perished because of their faith. You will see ruins, ruins everywhere that tell of love, of ambition, of death. Go to Greece and linger thoughtfully with blind old Homer. And before your mental vision, you will see Helen and her distaff filled with wool of violet blue. Sappho's words of love will ring in your ears.

From the Acropolis you can look across to a hillside not far away, and think of Socrates in his prison. In the distance a glimpse of Marathon, Salamis, and Attica will give you sensations that will be worth more to you than a lifetime spent in reading Byron, or any other who may have attempted descriptions. The marvels of sculpture, that grew into beauty under the hands of Phidias; the Parthenon, magnificent even in ruins, will excite your admiration and you will be lost in wonder looking at the work of those old Greek artificers who labored and finished the Parthenon under Pericles.

The dreamy mystery of those giants in intellect, the heroes, gods and goddesses, will enthrall you, and you will, because you cannot help but be effected by the memory of noble actions and deeds, be lifted out of the thought of self and

will feel that your life is enriched by the spell of that long ago—of men and things, of art, of melody. The glories of a by-gone past, the promise of the present and the future will cause you to feel the littleness of self; the insignificance of your own affairs, in the history of mankind and of the world.

Self-pity tends to one's undoing. Forget self and your own desires. Give your mind new thoughts to feed upon; and your strained nerves a rest; for you have concentrated every nerve of your body in your longings to be once more the same woman to your husband that you were before the other came.

You are weakened by mental fatigue; if not you would clearly understand how utterly impossible it would be for the old relations ever to be resumed—especially under the same conditions. Would not the face of the other woman, the mother of his son, be ever before your mental vision, even if you were once again installed as the mistress of his home? Could you be certain of your place in his heart? And, now, my dear, go forth in the strength of your purpose with your pilot, Will, at the helm; forget all that is unworthy—seek the good—think deeply on subjects foreign to yourself; and think also of the doctrine of the Stoics that we should be free from passion, unmoved by joy or grief, and should submit without complaining to the unavoidable.

Now, dear Edith, this letter, which concerns Ruth more than myself, will be long enough for you to read this time. In another soon to follow I will tell you of what concerns your friend Aileen.

XXIX

"But the spirit's food is love, and hearts that
starve may die in agony—
And no physician mark the cause of death."

It was the mountains that were consecrated by the presence of God. It was upon their heights He revealed himself to Moses. There are many Sinais in this world, lives are consecrated upon slopes so much nearer heaven than down by the sea level. They purify and uplift one's thoughts upon their altars. It was upon Calvary that Christ was crucified, and upon the Mount of Olives the ascension took place. And I, upon the mountains looking toward the stars, feel comforted, and feel also I am gaining strength to endure my wrongs, dear Aileen, even though I feel, in my loneliness and solitude, about as useless as those dead stars that are in the rayless ether. For I know too well he who vowed to love, cherish and protect, killed all that was best in me—all the brightness went out of my life, leaving a future for me that holds nothing alluring. The fountain of hope and joy went dry when the knowledge of Bert's treachery burnt and seared my heart. I can look forward to nothing that will be of comfort to me unless I may be able to help others who are in need of sympathy. * * * Your letter asking me to go abroad has occupied a great deal of my waking, thinking moments. You are wiser than I, and I feel that I should heed your admonition in this respect, as well as in other matters. Yet I must abide here a little while longer. At present I have not the courage, nor the strength to travel. I am learning my lesson; with more than mere mortal patience I await—strengthened by some unknown force that compels me to endure my life— when ofttimes the utter uselessness of it appalls me.

I look at the glittering stars in the calm heavens and ponder over the years that stretch ahead of me, for I am young in years if old in suffering, and I wonder if there are not fields bright with flowers, joyous with the music of birds,

and all that is bright and beautiful in that other world above. Surely among the myriads of stars there will be fairer worlds than this. So why do people who are unhappy dread to go hence? Why should I not desire to go? I have buried the best of me and think sometimes that my sorrow is beyond human endurance.

I can tell this to you, dear, and to none other. I do not want the sympathy of others which is very often veiled under a sneer. Nature is a tender nurse. It is true and enters into one's moods. The trees bending low over me as I sit alone by a rippling stream shiver in a gust of wind, and send showers of dewdrops into the needless waters, and I, too, find my needless tears flowing, hot and burning, for a lost love—a dead love, one I fear even while buoyed up by a faint hope will never be mine again.

You ask me to forget. God knows I try to overcome the heartaches, try to grow strong and well, for I do not want to grow old before I have lived years enough to warrant it. I awaken in the night and find myself sobbing and crying for Bert to come, and the silence is terrifying, for in dreams I hear the ringing sweetness of his voice that filled my soul, steeped my senses in the old sweet delirium of love that was ecstatic for a moment. Then my sobs bring the old hurt with the awakening, and the sickening terror of my loss, for it is the dread that grows deeper day by day that he does not care, that he has forgotten—yet even with the knowledge scorching my heart, it does not alter the fact that I love him even as I did when I thought he loved me.

I may not share his thoughts, his life, but God help me, I can love and that is better than to forget. But I try to suppress my fears, to forget my loneliness as much as I can, dear, and often throw myself down on the earth and listening I seem to hear the sympathetic heart beating beneath the pine-needles, strong, magnetic, powerful, soothing and comforting. So I am helped and feel that if there is a balm for my grief, it is here now. Later on I may put a good portion of this world between my lost love and myself. When the time comes, and you tell me it will come, then I shall feel different. But now pray that I may be able to endure the

present and not be too eager to lift the curtain that hides the future.

My life at best now is like a long and gloomy tunnel without a gleam of light; even the one faint beacon star of hope is dimmed. There are no joyful dreams to cheer me, only bitterness and unconquerable longings. I try to be rational, to look at my life as I would at a picture. I do not see it in an enviable light. It is not even "skyed." If so there might be a gleam from some stray sunbeam or wandering star to light it up for the moment, but it is on a dull colorless level that has nothing but a cold gray atmosphere that is both frame and perspective.

It has been said that no true love is in vain. Yet, I ask you, what has it profited me to give my whole soul, my heart's best and only love and all that was sweet and worth while in the world for me? What have I gained?—nothing that the most wretched on earth would covet. A ruined life confronts me, and can I hope to build anew?

But you cheer me and give me hope, even though it be only a faint spark left amid the dull gray ashes. You say that it is life's best gift to hope—its worst is to know. God grant that I may keep my reason and that I shall not know, if it be the worst.

RUTH.

XXX

"As Indian mothers see babes die for food,
She watched dry-eyed beside her starving heart."

There may be something in mental telegraphy, Edith, but I do not know if it will apply to written messages. Still, when the postman rang the bell a day or so ago, I seemed to know fully as well that I would have your letter, as I did a moment later, when my maid brought it to me. You are a dear girl to write me so promptly and I am as delighted to read your letters as if I were a young girl receiving a love letter. For you speak of things, of places I love, and which I fain would see again. If we only had a system of wireless telegraphy, then I might say to you much that it is not possible to write. There would be heart to heart talks we would both enjoy, but which might seem foolish if written.

In my last I told you fully of Ruth's sorrows, and that she has given me the almost hopeless task of trying to bring Bert to his senses. The idea is revolting, for in my heart I despise the man, yet for her sake I must use flattery and stoop to duplicity and deceit. Yet I would do all this cheerfully if I thought it were worth while. However, the effort must be made for her sake. Just now she is simply existing, and were it not for the faint hope in his ultimate return to her, I fear she would not be able to endure her life.

Barred from the one human heart she loved and trusted, the whole world is empty now for her. Just when she thought her haven of rest and peace was found, she was driven out by wickedness and cruelty without the shadow of an excuse; by the fiendishness, the brutality and selfishness of a man, who listened only to his wicked partner in crime; and cared more for his own selfish pleasures than the heart-broken woman, who failed to interest or amuse him before the birth of her child, and who was of still less concern when ill and grieving over her little babe.

My dear, remember a woman should save her heart if it were possible from going out in a hopeless love. It is best always to subordinate the feelings and give sense and reason a show. If so, there would be less wrecked lives, which are sacrificed to romantic and senseless fancies, and which often scorch the heart with the very madness of a love that banishes contentment and peace.

Poor Ruth's cup of joy was so full for a few brief months, that it brimmed over and intoxicated her, for her love was a mad idolatrous passion, that thrilled her with the ecstasy of possession, of feeling that her hero, her idol was hers alone; the handsome, fascinating, clever husband, her love and trust in him was supreme.

He was so different to other men—a sort of divinity to her. She never thought of the sufferings he would heap upon her, or his brutality which cropped out when the reality of married life palled upon him. But the temptress came and you know the result. I think I can appreciate such a love as hers, though I am sure I am incapable of it myself. A love that patiently endures unkindness and indifference and insult is doubtless grand; and perchance is nobler than pride. Such a love ought to convert Bert and bless him by its purity and steadfastness, but "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," and being arrayed on the weaker side I pray fervently that he may spend the rest of his life binding the sheaves of regret. Of one thing I am pretty sure, Edith dear, that I shall never allow my affections to go beyond my control. If I ever indulge in the grand passion, I shall love as long and deeply as does the one whom I shall honor with my affections. I know that I shall not love one moment longer than my lover shall love me. Any change in love's temperature will at once touch the mercury in my nature and cause a corresponding rise or fall as the case may be. I have felt this deeply in my friendship. Then how much greater will I feel the slightest change in love's atmosphere.

I know that men are selfish. They like constancy, truth and purity in woman. While they exact these things in the woman they honor with their regard, it is a rare one, my friend, who feels that he must give in return that which he

receives. Nature has endowed me with certain characteristics, which demand an exact return for what I give. I despise base and mean things, yet do not want to pose as a very good woman. Those very good women—I have known a few—are usually quite uninteresting and generally find a man for a husband who is willing to have them preside over the home, bear his name and children, and he gives the good woman a sort of oatmeal and skimmed milk kind of affection, which passes for love. And that, mind you, is all she ever gets, for it is the other woman with a little spice in her nature that attracts and often gains the man's passionate love—beside which the love given his wife is as whipped cream is to whey.

I said this recently to a friend, and added that I was not fond of whey or curds. She said the skimmed-milk proposition might be better in the long run, that too much cream was not good for us physically or mentally, and that she had noticed mad passions often ended in disgust or indifference. I was afraid she had reference to Bert and Ruth, though so far their separation is unknown. She is supposed to be away from home on account of her health.

But to return to myself, I told you that I was going to do all I could to help Ruth, and I am bracing myself for the battle. I do not claim to have any unnecessary vices, but I have enough to show by contrast the virtues I possess. If there was not the sense of power within me, if I did not feel capable of conquest, or at least feel that it were worth while trying, think you that I would venture? It may be a battle royal, but I am predestined and foreordained to go into this encounter upheld by the righteousness of my aim.

A weaker and a better woman, would counsel Ruth to leave her cause to an all-wise Providence. But here is where I am not very good, for I feel deep in my heart the desire to see him writhe and suffer if such thing were possible, even as he has made Ruth suffer. Only the tempted know what temptation means, and I am not trying to resist the idea that comes to me again and again. I feel as if it were the unexpected that was going to happen, as it always is happening to people somewhere or other. Yet I am not faltering.

I know that women in love will very often face the world, daring and even challenging publicity it would seem, knowing all the while that a grain of publicity would ruin them in the eyes of the dear social world which asks only, if you must live in glass houses, do not turn on the electric lights; yet they risk it, and the smirch, for the sake of a love which must be strong enough to cast self aside, while if they only possessed a grain of selfishness which the men have how different many lives would be. Well, my dear, I am not in love, and realize that I am taking chances, all for the wish to help a friend. "Greater love than this"—you know the rest.

I realize that I am only an ordinary mortal. Only a Patti might take the reins of fate in her own hands, and bowl along over smooth roads while the world applauded. Only a Bernhardt could have an accident or two before marriage, and yet have all the world at her feet. It is left lesser mortals to buffet and feel the scorn of the world that is as hard as the nether mill-stone, and as unforgiving and insatiable in its persecutions upon one who accidentally, and more often than otherwise if innocent of the wiles of men, is unknowingly placed beyond the pale of social life before she is aware of the crime.

I do not know—do any of us?—that we are warped mentally. I am rather certain that I am all right physically, and I try to look at myself honestly at times; but fear that I am somewhat prejudiced. We grow to look kindly upon our belongings and find old things are dear, and we fail to see age or crookedness in many things we have. Yet I am rather sure of myself—for they can command who believe they can. So strong in my belief I go forth to conquer or fail. Only fate can answer which it shall be.

AILEEN.

XXXI

"Whatever is taught or told,
However men moan or sigh,
Love never shall grow cold
And life shall never die."

These words of Bayard Taylor have been running through my mind today, since reading your last letter, Aileen, and I am wondering if his experiences were not rather limited. You and I are not old as the years go; but we have had time a-plenty to learn that love, as warmed on the altar fires of some hearts, grows cold indeed from lack of interest, probably, in keeping the fires replenished.

That life can never die may be a comfort to most of earth's wanderers, who strive to do as near right as understanding will allow them to do. But when one finds a man like Bert Wilder, fashioned in the image of his Maker, so far as the exterior is concerned, but fitted up internally by satanic influences, the question arises, If life shall never die, what sort of life will his be in the hereafter? Will he be exempt from all the wrongs he has done here, and revel in a beautiful heaven with poor Ruth and some of the rest of us, who have tried to wrong no one, even when sorely tempted at times?

I am not cat-like by nature, but feel my fingers tingle at the thought of him and his poor deserted wife. But I am human enough and revengeful enough, to wish you all possible success in your efforts to win him away from his present infatuation. For I am rather sure it is only temporary. These affairs are seldom otherwise. If you could only make him suffer a little bit of what Ruth has endured, it would be retaliation, and might give him a better chance to redeem himself here on earth, and there will be more here—and less of purgatory hereafter for him. Am I revengeful? Perhaps; at any rate I wish you all success, you are to enter a campaign in a righteous cause, the strong aiding the weak. Nature has amply endowed you mentally

and physically for the undertaking and I shall expect only good reports.

I do not understand in this enlightened age that there need be one law for men and another for women. We have outgrown some theories and traditions, and Bert had scarcely the right to treat Ruth as he has.

In the days of ancient Rome, it was the custom for men to put away their wives, whenever they chose, unquestioned. Later it became necessary to record the fact before a procurator; gradually it became the custom, if the woman was blameless, the man was forced to provide for her. This was the first gleam of light in the recognition that a woman had any right to expect anything like justice from the hands of man, when he chose to be brutal. Not until Marcus Aurelius reigned, came the wonder of the world at that time—a woman under Roman rule dared to appear before the tribunal with a woman friend as attorney and—take heed, my friend—the woman succeeded!

It was afterwards under the ruling of Constantine, who brought Christianity with him into Rome, displacing Paganism and a few other objectionable things that the rights of women were practically cancelled, and not until one thousand years later was there much if any change in her condition.

However, we, with all the pride we have in our own free country, have not overmuch to be proud of. It is not so very long ago that a man in our glorious nation's capital thrashed his wife for wearing bloomers on the street and was applauded by a learned judge for the act! I am very sure that Ruth, like the one of old, is most fortunate in having you for a friend and attorney. For she is so devoted to her church that I fear she will not avail herself of the rational solution of the difficulty and get a divorce.

I know how her nature shrinks from publicity, yet she certainly has the sanction of the Scriptures, which gives unfaithfulness as the only excuse for divorce. So she might easily have the sanction of the church if she can only get her heart to acquiesce. I should not care, I fancy, if his imperfections were laid bare to the world. I would prefer that

to hiding away like a guilty thing as she is now doing, and leaving the world to misjudge her, possibly.

Whereas, if the public knew the truth of his cruelty to her, his warmed over affections might quickly cool under the world's cold criticism; for the world's good opinion is dearer to him, I fancy, than the love of any woman, other than his wife, if I understand the man's nature. And had she insisted upon her rights even up to the divorce courts, I think she would have found him a different sort of man to deal with. My idea of Ruth is, that though she has been brought up under the pure light of Christianity, she has gone back to Paganism, and unconsciously, perhaps, is making a god of a very human man, and is worshipping an idol of common clay.

But enough of my moralizing. I will tell you that since my last letter to you I have been traveling through different portions of Italy. I am only mentioning some places, just to give you an idea that I am not wasting my time. We will have enough to talk about some day when we can compare notes. I have walked the white sands in the hush of the morning, under a sky of primrose color that borders the turquoise colored crescent of water framed in by ilex trees, under whose shade Shelley wrote the "Cenci."

I have sailed in boats on Como which floated over the dark blue waters with sails like the breasts of swans. Have watched the star-sprinkled waters of Lake Maggiore, and listened to the songs of the peasants in the gloaming, while they worked or idled the hours away among the fire-flies or let their boats drift idly, resting their oars as the notes of the Angelus came trembling, some near, some far, from unseen churches, brooding over small villages, hidden in the mountains.

I have listened to the nightingales in the Tuscan Vales. I have seen the moonlight on Fiesole—and on San Miniato—you know the dear old Etruscan town high up on the slopes beyond Florence. I need the dull blues, and green grays, and the yellows of the old masters to paint the scene as I beheld it one day. Words, I fear, can give you but an idea only. I saw the grayish green of the olive trees banked up

against hills, which show the yellow soil amid duller shades of green, which seemed to enhance the beauty of the groves; they mean nothing in particular to you or me, who are accustomed to olive orchards at home. Ours fresh and young, in their infancy almost, are the merest babes beside these gnarled and twisted giants of centuries old, that are keeping watch here as they are at Tivoli, beyond Rome and the Campagna.

The blue sky here is no bluer than California skies, as you well know, and it seems commonplace in the telling. Yet the picture as I saw it, is extremely Italian. It had an atmosphere of its own that is not imagined. It is the atmosphere of time, of age—that one reverences—and is unlike our newness.

Out on the road to Fiesole I loitered one blessed afternoon; resting on an old gray wall, I breathed the fragrant air, body and soul steeped in the calm beauty of the place. An old mottled convent wall crimsoned here and there with splashes of damask roses, and a tree white with orange blossoms with a yellow globe now and then showing last year's fruit, was near me, reminding me of our own fruit and blossoms at home. And my thoughts were with you on the rim of the Western World, breathing the same perfumes and sending, I believed, a thought now and then to me.

Wandering on, I saw fragments and bits of sculpture that existed in unbroken beauty under a civilization finer than anything in our progressive days. I looked far across to the misty Vallambrosan hills, an amethystine haze hovered over fair Florence and westward to the peaks of the Carrara Mountains. Below me the peasants were singing as they always are, in this country, tender love songs and snatches of operatic airs. No matter how poor they are, there is always a song bubbling up from the heart, singing like birds, spontaneous, yet full of melody and passion. The sounds came soft and tender, with a breath from the rose-scented terraces; and added to the fragrance and the songs, was the richness of tones of color—the violet and deep amethyst of the sky.

The Apenines gleamed through a blue mist that, changing into softer hues formed a fitting background for a picture

of the Lucca hills. Over there lies the Via Crucis, and the river flashing as it winds its way by village and hamlet through the fair plains of Tuscany, westward to the sea. I saw roads lined with chestnut trees, and long lines of stone walls, gray and broken, but over whose scars and rents vines creep up and twine lovingly, falling in avalanches of green and blossoming abandonment. Well kept villas, old tumbled down houses and older palaces gave me pictures to recall and showed scenes ineffaceable. I looked upon all the freshness of nature about me and then at the ruins of walls, palaces and churches which are a petrifaction of thoughts of hope, realized or otherwise, of the builders and makers of the forgotten dead.

I thought of the old masters who loved the fair old city of Florence, of the harmony of color which they loved and painted or endeavored to do, so long ago, of their work there in the Pitti, and Uffizi galleries, of the unrivaled collection of paintings and statuary, and of the poor artists I saw there copying the pictures, gaunt and poverty stricken as many undoubtedly are, working at starvation prices, while all this wealth of color, form and beauty, is inviting them to copy from nature, to insist on themselves rather than spend a lifetime of imitation. They should study and

"Read what is still unread
In the manuscripts of God,"

and so gain wisdom, peace and recompense, a sure reward from nature. I feel that I am doubly blessed in coming here. It seems one could achieve almost anything, amid such surroundings. Nature grants no diplomas. One does not desire them, or anything save the love, the satisfaction that fills the heart to overflowing, that strengthens, satisfies, and fills the soul with happiness, when studying and learning something new. It seems possible for one to be one of the seers, one of earth's blessed ones—like Michael Angelo, and see with eyes of faith, even if the hands be unable to carve, the beautiful angels in the cold shapeless stone. * * * In Florence is the church Carmine where are some wonderful frescoes from which the old masters drew their inspiration. Now, in other halls, other artists draw from the old masters.

Rather strange, is it not, this persistency in copying? Surely there is something lacking, energy or lack of appreciation. Nature never tires the lover, for it always enriches, it comforts, but it does not corrupt. Hoard up its treasures, its riches as we may, we cannot exhaust or impoverish her, for there are boundless blessings for one and all to search. There is peace, harmony and healing in the wandering winds, soul-satisfying harmonies of quivering leaves and rustling grasses, the songs of birds and faint murmurings of waters, the hum of insects, the fleecy clouds piled high, changing, disappearing, reappearing in fantastic forms, but always attractive in ephemeral loveliness. In whatever form or aspect viewed, the earth and the heavens never pall or cloy the artist, the rich or the poor; all find an inexhaustible supply and the appetite of the appreciative is never sated.

I wonder at the artists and the demand of the public for the same copies as the years go by; battered angels, footless madonnas, a torso, a noseless face, all are sketched, and the hundreds of madonnas painted with the brassy aureole hanging miraculously above their all-unconscious heads. The bloated bow-legged Christ child in evidence everywhere before which adoring people bow, is neither human or divine according to my idea of form, except in a few cases and they are easily picked out of the hundred and more in the two galleries.

Just to show you I am appreciative I will ease your mind by saying I like the "Annunciation," by Andrea del Sarto, and the "Madonna in Affliction"—and "Cumean Sybil," by Sassoferrato. Titian's "Flora" and "La Madeline," Guido Reni's "Cleopatra" and "Triumph of David" by Rubens, all appeal to me, as do hosts of others. But in these days of ready-made clothing and in the made-to-order-while-you-wait age, I wonder if machine-made paintings will not soon be in vogue and the ambitious artist will be simply a machinist. If so, there might be some compensation. There will be fewer copies, less of the nightmare representations of Beatrice Cenci and newer subjects. * * * Don't think I have fallen from grace or that I am losing my appreciation of art. It is not so and I have been scribbling some

of my thoughts to you while feasting my eyes at intervals upon scenes described. I will paint a picture of a certain spot that will interest you; and I will bring it that you may refresh your memory. And, now from Fiesole I am going back to Firenze, as the natives love to call Florence, down that dream of a road built not by taxation, but by issuing patents of nobility to Americans and Englishmen who were willing to pay for a false title in the days of Tuscany's grand dukes, that admission might be obtained within the charmed circle. Regretfully I shall say good-bye to the quaint old town of Fiesole, that was old when Rome was in its infancy; its dirty but picturesque beggars, who make a pretense of braiding straw into fancy baskets and fans for the souvenir hunter. I will take a last glance at the Vale d'Arno from the plateau in front of the Franciscan Church and drink in the ineffable beauty of the scene.

The dear old earth is so beautiful, it is not strange, dear, that we forget at times to look heavenward. The eye of faith is hardly strong enough to see beyond this earth, God's glorious footstool; and how glad, how more than thankful am I, that it has been permitted me to see a little of this dear world. And I know it has made a better woman of me. I am trying to improve myself as best I can by observation and study.

Some things interest me fully as much as my description of places written you. In Italy and in Florence particularly I am interested in the people of today, while thinking of the depravity that existed and that reached its height under Lorenzo de Medici,—the need of Savonarola's presence, his teachings—and I think of the eight years' work—how his voice rang through the turbulent city that wanted him at that particular time. I have lingered in the Duomo and the square that once echoed back the voice of Savonarola, pleading, asking these impressionable people to turn to something better. How well he succeeded for a time, and the strong tide of reform that drew people irresistibly by its strength into an atmosphere of fasting and prayer, of self-renunciation of the vanities of life—you perhaps remember to have read.

I have gazed upon the statue and fountain where the man who worked for the good of his people was burned and have

mused upon the reaction and think how unreal, unstable are the emotions that sway humanity. A people who fasted and prayed, who not only renounced the vanities of life, but sacrificed in their foolish frenzy pictures, statues and rare books—things that could not be to them necessities were brought—untold treasures—and heaped together and consigned to the flames, even as he, the author and instigator of the reform, was sacrificed later on.

MONUMENT IN FLORENCE WHERE SAVONAROLA WAS BURNED.

I look down upon the city beautiful in its environments. I think of it in the fifteenth century in the height of its splendor, one of the most cultured as well as one of the most beautiful of Italian cities, the center of intellectual and artistic life, a model of all that was elegant, and wonder at the inconsistency of human nature. Her people are quiet now; there is not the pomp of other centuries. Yet her charm is felt by all who come within her gates. There are art treasures that enthrall one in her galleries, her churches

and museums. The old Duomo, the Baptistry, with the wonderful bronze gates, the Campanile, and her historic streets, the Arno and fair environs touch the heart. History and mystery cling to the palaces and walls and cling to one's heart, leaving ineffaceable impressions.

Florence has fallen from her exalted state. Mutations of time give food for thought, my dear, until one's mind flags and begs for rest and lighter themes. I get tired of too much history. So much of the old, that dates back to the dim old Etruscan times and days of Dante, Michael Angelo, Boccacio, and Galileo, all figure in Florence, the Medici-haunted city, and swing back and forth through my mental vision like the pendulum in Galileo's dreams. And I, tired, turn away from it all, even as the sun turned away from the earth in Galileo's dream, and seek a well earned and needed rest.

EDITH.

XXXII

"Shall we meet no more, my love, at the binding
of the sheaves,
In the happy harvest fields as the sun sinks
low,
When the orchard paths are dim with the drift
of fallen leaves,
As the reapers sing together in the misty eves?"

The cluster of houses called a town is rimmed by white alkali earth and stunted grasses, which stretching away in endless desolation is spotted like a leper. The desert lies hot and glittering in the heat waves, a desolate thing cursed by God and man. In its terrorizing alkaline sterility, water-forgotten and God-forsaken, this sun-cursed land that has been pierced by the sun's red shafts since the earth was young, and even before the hand of Cain was lifted and the greedy earth drank his brother's blood, seems crying for vengeance in its desolation.

It is ever at war with life, and makes the bravest aware of its personality; in its cruel heat which dries and shrivels, in its lying, phantom-like semblance of lakes and rivers, which are alluring and enticing—a demon in its blasts of whirling, blinding, circling sand devils, which choke and blind those who dare its desolate wind-swept places, appalling in its tragedies and yet compelling admiration in its inexorable calm, its steady undefeated purposes.

The pulse of life, the soft but persistent heart-beats which one seems to hear or feel running in mystical regularity among growing, active things, where the sap pulses through plant life and makes itself known, where one can watch things grow, cannot be imagined here.

The tiny brook stealing its way timidly among the ferns and mosses contains the embryo force of murmuring rivers, and eternal, living activity. Indifferent to all, it is only achieving its purpose, doing its part in the great plan of the universe.

So does the desert. In some inexplicable way its sterile soil, shriveled and warped by the sun, dumb in its stillness and silence, the dreadful silence that lies on the land where the quivering heat waves sting and burn the face of the intruder; the hot breath coming in its furnace-like heat, seems to whisper "Keep away if you would not share the eternal silence and desolation of my realm."

I am strengthened in a way, Aileen, as I abide here. The vastness of the rolling leagues of emptiness, a visionary panorama glowing with heat and a grayish whiteness, pathless wastes of sand, depth, space, mystery and calm,—a calm that seems to appeal to me, that is companionable, for it exerts a powerful influence upon me, though I have been only a short time within its confines—the withered earth, the rigid mystery of crumbling sand banks, showing dry waterless streams reaching to dimly seen mountains, which show like condensed shadows, darkly blue in places, shading to lighter tints in others, on the one side; on the other, the desert lies without boundary lines—like my life, it seems. Yet toward the mountains there is an uplifting of heights above the level, though promising nothing, they caused a tremor in my nearly hopeless heart, as if there might be something beyond the desolation spread out before me.

I have had my hours of desolation, of agony and soul torture, and the hardest of all is the thought that I have not deserved it. Like the One, my enemies have triumphed for the time at least, through treachery and deceit. I am almost hopeless, pride is lowered to the very dust, and life is a thing only to be endured. The dull cold hand of despair has gripped my heart. All the warmth and brightness that was once mine are drowned by the tears that fall inward. There are wounds made by words that are deeper, more lasting than any blows which might have fallen from hands.

There is no music in my heart now, only a sobbing wail that cries out against the injustice of others. So my burden seems indeed greater than I can bear. * * * I came here and found the desert appealed to my mood. There is something in the gigantic spaces and unknown leagues of emptiness that, while giving the impression of unutterable

freedom, there lurks in the thought that there also lies desolation and death. There is a tragic air in every aspect presented by this region of green-gray shrubbery and glistening alkali semblance of earth, where in its mystery of mirage, one sees the representation of other sections of earth blessed by beautiful green things that a well-watered and fertile soil brings forth to gladden all animate beings.

Here, about all that the withered and wrinkled earth can do is to give an imitation in her mirage of things the observer has seen elsewhere. I have found this arid Arizona even more desolate than I had imagined it to be. Sterile nature is here, in the white, powdered alkali wastes where the sun pours down its unrelenting rays, beating hotly and mercilessly upon the mysterious desert with its illusions of sparkling rivers, of forests, its wealth of color. I see the blended tints of amethyst, mauve and violet change into dull slate, and the rich ripe apricot yellows, topaz, and chromes, die into a pale gray. And then black night draws its veil of mystery over the illusions of the flaming, changing, alluring but dreadful desert stretching on and on to the terra incognita—the Mexican border that has drawn so many within its death-loving embrace.

Amid these scenes of desolation that possess a strange fascination for me I think of you, Aileen, breathing the pure incense laden atmosphere of the Sierras; nature's best and most invigorating medicine, which comes sweeping along a range that is beautiful to you and to me, veiled in the haze of dreamland, for it is as though I pictured you in dreams. I can see with you the web-like intricate tracery of boughs etched against the sapphire skies. I hear the wind-sprites playing soft illusive airs, music that saddens to the verge of tears, yet with a sweetness that touches the soul.

You are feeling, dear Aileen, in your heart what the winds are whispering to you, and they are telling you that I am thinking of you, my friend of friends. The sounds come to you like the "horns of elf land," and they tell you of my pain and desolation, and the thought that you understand and sympathize is much to me indeed.

While you are enjoying the breezes that come pure and clean from an atmosphere of untrodden snow that invigor-

ates like draughts of wine, I feel the hot, scorching winds that shrivel and kill while they caress.

I look upon the boughs of the yucca trees that are bent and twisted as if in pain, bitter and terrible in their gaunt and distorted semblance of other trees. They stand in gray stubbornness, resisting the blasting heat, the sand storms and siroccos that swoop down, bearing fine particles of sand caught in hot haste; which also beat and force me back from their domain, the deathlike region of waterless wastes. They catch me in their whirling winds and send fierce gusts stinging and scorching against my face, forcing the hot breath of the desert down my throat. Then they clutch and pull me on and on as I ride over the ghastly region, calling, compelling in their mysterious strength to their haunts of oblivion, where remembrance cannot hurt in the nothingness of desolation beyond.

But the horrible Something of the desert that seemed so sure of me created within me a spirit that was aroused to combat with unseen forces. I had thought of myself as dead in life, but I found here an irresistible influence had taken possession of me. I became aware that deep within me were voices unintelligible at first, but clamoring for recognition, and at last I understood. They were the voices of the poor, distorted imitation of trees, of shrubs, gray, almost lifeless, fighting the pitiless elements, bravely clinging to life, that was apparently useless. They were fulfilling nature's plans and obeying her laws.

The desert has taught me a lesson I had not expected to learn. Life here is sustained by unseen forces and it seems as if they were doing penance or expiation terrible and bitter for some sin against nature. While other fortunate trees grow in sweet oases, in the hills, and valleys, by sea-swept edges and murmuring rivers; these born of the dust of the savage fecundity of the desert exist for some purpose amid the wastes that sear and crackle under the sun's fierce heat.

These seem to have awakened a kindred feeling in my breast. There may be some purpose in this sorrow, this grief—I do not know. I look upward to the distant mountains and see a gleam of brightness, and I think though my

life is one of gloom and monotony, that though it is one of sadness, yet some little lightening of the burden may yet be mine, when if I can reach the heights up the steep path that fate has placed in my way, I may even yet attain a well earned and welcome rest.

Yet only a little while longer will I remain here upon the cactus-haunted mesa, and look upon the great gray stretches of desert that in the uncomplaining silence is teaching me and helping in a way. My weary soul and tortured heart find a strange companionship in this lifeless desert. For do I not know the resemblance? My horizon was bounded by the great love that filled the limited world for me—limited, for in all its width and breadth, there was only the man whose love made my known world fair and sweet, only to leave it desolate and seared like those white spots amid the gray sage brush that seems to draw back from them, though almost as white and lifeless as the barren soil. Yet they struggle to live, and surely if life is preferable to the poor stunted grasses to dust and oblivion, it may hold in it yet something for me.

And in the purple distances in the hidden regions where the desert and sky meet, there seems to be peace, and its influences are soothing, for there is something that appeals to me and my puny self. My longing seems so insignificant, that I feel more than ever in my life my littleness and I feel also that the desert has taught me a lesson, for it too is doing its part in the great plan. I can only be patient as I may—hoping that all will be for the best—that all this is for some purpose, for some good.

The yucca's pure white obelisk rears its head on the low hillsides which rise above the hot desert sands. They stand singly or in groups like monuments in a graveyard. I know not how they draw the moisture from those dry, arid hillsides and the hot sands lower down. In the scorching hot air, the yucca and the bayonet plant thrive, and the soft white fragrant flower bells wave in the faint breeze pure and sweet above the parched earth from whence they spring. They make me feel more cheerful. Out of the Sahara of my life may I not hope for something green and tender, something

helpful, hopeful and loving that will yet be mine if I can only wait God's own time and trust in his abiding love and tenderness.

These lance-like shafts pointing heavenward are nature's fair, sweet monuments, teaching that above the grave of my buried hopes and happiness possibly my life may yet be filled with fragrance and joy.

Now and then I see a grave here and there by the wayside that tells mutely of some earthworn and weary creatures who were not content with their limitations, or like myself forced to wander far, following where hope, illusive but sweet, cheered them on through days, and in the night's shadows brooded softly and tenderly over the tired senses until sleep—even the last sleep—shut out the whole universe and gave them heaven's sweetest boon—rest.

So I think, as we speed along, dear Aileen, for now I am going on toward Mexico, that they have found their limitations indeed, and that the pitiful length and scant breadth are roomy enough now for the earth-tossed and tired beings, who loved freedom and change, who had their joys and sorrows, who hoped, feared and suffered, laughed and wept. Now the few miserable feet of earth claims for all its cycles those who died here—the unknown and unsatisfied, who met defeat calmly or otherwise, but defeat certainly, else their bones might be in some spot where human feet would pause and some hand drop a flower now and then.

I think of many things as the train speeds along, for I am following your wishes and trying to find out if change will help me to forget. Dear God! If only I may forget and endure with more fortitude! I cannot, according to St. James, "Rejoice when I fall into many trials." I do not rejoice; I simply endure them with what little strength I have.

If it be in the loneliness of my secret thoughts and hurts, my blighted hopes and ambitions, that I am tried and proven, then perhaps it may be worth while. Yet I cannot understand why the storms of life are necessary to mortals, any more than they are to the flowers and plants God has created.

I think of the beauty and perfection of hot-house plants that are kept away from the blight of the storms, of scorch-

ing winds and winter's cold. Then I think of how the flowers look in the fields out in the storm and tempest. Suffering has not strengthened me. Does the shaken tree grow firmer at the root? Yes, until an extra blast sends it shivering and broken to the earth and its life is done.

I think of myself as one of those wind-swept flowers that I have often seen after a pitiless storm has passed over the fields. I think, too, of my girlhood, surrounded by an atmosphere of purity and heavenly sweetness, of the tenderness that hedged me in, and the thought comes to me like a barbed arrow. But the thoughts and the loneliness do not kill. I would they could and so end it—only to die and forget—forgetfulness and a dreamless sleep, is all I ask.

Do you wonder? You who know how my life is spoiled; how I am driven a wanderer from home. I have tried to cultivate a patient and meek spirit, have wearied heaven with my prayers and tears that seem useless and unavailing. Yet at times I rebel and wonder why I am denied my birthright, my inheritance, as a being created by a God of love, to go through the world starving for affection, while a man lives who cares nothing for me and my helplessness. Would I might find some heaven-sent teacher who could sweeten my misfortune and make my life happy by reason or philosophy.

I have no sage to teach me wisdom, and I cannot live and comply cheerfully with my wrecked hopes and broken heart. I shall have one consolation that this agony of unrest cannot last long, and I will not fear oblivion which will free me from all life's miseries. I fondly hope that in another existence I may be happier than in this one. If not, I pray God that there be no awakening for me.

But if death should mean an intermission of a life that will return again, what have I to hope for beyond the grave? I want no broken remembrances of this world; I want only rest and oblivion of all that has wrought me woe and agony. My whole being pleads and yearns for the faith my mother had, the faith she tried so hard to instill in my mind. I should like to feel what heaven is after so much hell on earth. I should like to feel that I shall know her and my little baby that I scarcely remember. I want to think that it would be

heaven indeed to hold her in my arms, and that some time, in God's own time and way, that among all the angels and hosts of heaven I may find my own dear love, who will have seen his error and come up the shining way cleansed and made pure from the wrongs he has done, purified from the dross of the world, repentant and forgiven.

But I have not the faith now, dear Aileen. The mystery of life, the unsolved mystery of death—of the hereafter, if I only knew—if only I could have something definite, except blind faith, which is only a belief, or as we hypnotize ourselves into the idea, that the hereafter shall be as we hope, or desire. But for me there is no rent in the gray veil that separates the hereafter from this life, whereby I might have a glimpse, one ray of hope, of comfort, or a certainty of what heaven might be for me.

As it is, heaven that seemed so near to me in my childhood, that I thought I could reach it from the top of those poor little hills, is even beyond the reach of my feeble prayers, for they seem rather to fall back and my heart echoes the cry—useless, useless! I turn from the unattainable and vague to your human sympathy, which is dearer to me than you can ever know. My heart yearns for your love.

My hands are held your way, and I seem to feel your strong warm clasp, and something sweet and consoling comes back to me, for I feel that you know, that you will help, and aid me, if you can.

Since writing the above, Aileen, I feel that I have been selfish far more than I knew, probably, in burdening you with my sorrows. I shall try to keep self more out of my letters. You ask me to write of what I see and enjoy. I have not your appreciation, but will do the best I can to portray nature and her wonders, her moods as I see them; shall try to occupy myself as much as possible and give you an idea how I am progressing. I am going because you asked me to go, and am going to try to be as much of my old self as possible. I must store my mind, grow mentally and physically strong for the time when you will send for me—see how hopeful I grow as I write—telling me that I shall be welcome—that the past will be only as an evil dream and that my love shall be my own again.

RUTH.

XXXIII

"Some say that when all the plants in the garden of Eden were pulled up by the roots, one bush the angel had planted was left growing and it spread its seed over the whole earth, and its name is Love."

I am burning joss-sticks and incense to your memory, Edith dear, in El Nido, my nest, where I am spending some very quiet, happy days, perched on a jutting crag above the ocean —the dear old Pacific we both love, where the waves break upon the solid rocks far below me. I shall not tell you just where I have built my nest—that is to be a surprise to you when you return—birds do not herald the fact to other birds the whereabouts of their quiet nests. But some sweet day I hope to bring you here.

There are untold nooks in our hundreds of miles of California coast line—places known and unknown; and suffice it for the present that you only know that my particular nest lies between the sea and the sky. Yet nearer the sea than the heavens, though the clouds hang so low they trail through the feathery tops of the tall pines, which stand like grim, immovable sentinels, guarding me on the landward side.

I feel the salt spray on my face and the tang in my nostrils. My eyes never tire of the kaleidoscopic effect of the waters—the swirl of the currents about the sunken reefs, the sun-glints on the waves and the wind-tossed clouds scurrying across the blue skies which are scarcely equaled by the Italian skies you are enjoying.

The cloud shadows chase each other over the dimpling, sparkling waters. Bits of vapor from the fog-land lying in the dim distance are blown in now and then, while away off to my left a great white, sinuous, living thing, is creeping up the cañon, expanding, growing, changing into foaming, rolling masses of greyish-white that smooth out the sharp outline of crag and peak in the deep ravines, leaving a wisp here and there on the pines. Flaunting streamers wave triumphantly, then disappear, while the great mass pushes

steadily and rapidly upwards,—a stream that goes up hill, that in its soft intangibleness is uncanny in its weirdness, yet resistless as time itself. Nothing can stay its progress. The waves of the ocean can only go so far, moan and thunder in rage as they do, but this great fog-stream of nothingness is all powerful, and is like death in its coldness; yet though it covers like a pall the beautiful hills and sparkling waters at times and shuts the sun from me, I know that it cannot endure except for a time, that the earth and the heavens are unchangeable—that they are not lost, only for the moment, and that the fog, symbolical of death, leaves no terrors to those who understand.

What dreams come to me, dear, when nestled in the warmth of my nest, sheltered from winds and fogs. Memory brings up other days, other scenes, which are varied as the changing tints on the shifting uncertain waters. There are notes of half-forgotten songs I have sung with you and friends we both love. Both you and they are now beyond my hand clasp, but never in this world, or the next—if God wills—beyond the reach of my love, the tenderness of which is with you now wherever you are. * * * Do you not know and feel how my thoughts and my love are with you, when you are weary with the toil of seeing and thinking of dead ages, of people and ruins, that have passed away like the fog-wraiths at noontide? When you muse upon the complexities of life and are wearied to the verge of human endurance, you will feel that I am with you in spirit; that I am asking, entreating you to come, to drift back from the Old World to the New World of ours and find rest with me.

We would walk along the beach and climb the rugged rocks. We would ride or drive along the unparalleled coast, where the hills dabble their feet in the water of the glorious green-blue ocean, which has cut the solid rocks in serrated ridges and charming caves. We would look out upon the world of surging waters that were—before Nero's Golden House was dreamed of on the Palatine, before Rome, or your Etruscan relics were, before the pyramids; even back to the dim beginning of things, these waters had their ceaseless ebb and flow, coming in full and strong, rising up to

their limitations; then back and back, drawing away from the line in sullen fury, yet certain and sure of its daily rise and fall, sure of its own vast realm as it sweeps in angry roars or uncontrolled fury, or shining in its peaceful moods like a great, glittering, sparkling gem under the glowing sun.

I love the ocean in its peaceful moods, as I do when the storms gather, and the winds lash the limitless sweep of waters into a terrible frenzy, when the waves thunder and beat against the walls that sustain me, crashing into hollow nooks and sea-worn caves, bellowing in fury and unbounded strength. It seems then that I love it in its fury more than in its calmer moods.

Again we would rest among those gnarled sombre cypress trees that stand guard on that point of land jutting out into the sea—Cypress Point. You remember the weird magnificence of those trees, for there are none others like them. They are of themselves a part, like the cedars of Lebanon, grand and majestic in their isolation; well might the trees in Eden, "that were in the garden of God" of which Ezekiel wrote—envy them; only all the trees here are in God's country and there is no envy. All are blest because of location.

We would gather mosses and frail sweet flowers and our own State flower, the bright yellow poppy, or eschscholtzia. Do you know that the Indians call them the Great Spirit Flower, believing that the golden petals dropping year after year into the earth, sank and gradually formed the bright metal for which the strangers were ever searching.

And while recounting legends to you, we would watch the changing tints that charm me as if it were always the first time, and while feasting our eyes on the scenery, we would go down to that old, old Carmel Mission, where the very flesh of history is under the quaint tiled roof, and in the solemn silence we could hear its heart-beats echoing up against the arches.

Or, as I have sat and mused, wondering at times as the sounds of waters came to my ears, beating, moaning, calling in vain endeavor to be understood by the material soul in me which cannot understand the mystery of the soul of the waters, that have come in ceaseless ebb and flow during the

cycles dating back to the time when the waters were divided. and were "gathered together unto one place."

I revel in the struggle. There is something that appeals to another phase in my nature. There seems to be something in the depths of my being that has slept until the storms experienced here awoke the warring instinct within me. And I feel that I could do, and dare anything, that I could go forth armed for any conflict, my spirit ready for any encounter, and like the sea, knowing its limitations, yet sure in its strength to conquer in the end.

So with the mood strong upon me I will go hence in a little time, prepared to do and dare all that is possible for a woman and a friend to do.

After the storm, calmness and peace! The hills dim and gray are wreathed in foamy white clouds, a purple haze at noontide reaching half way up their sloping sides, and as the day wears away a rose tint at eventide, capped by a nebulous vapor, ghost-like in its strange configurations, lies back of El Nido, making a strange fascinating picture. And whichever way I turn, either looking on land or sea, I see pictures it were well worth your while to come and paint.

Here is the wide world of waters with their unfathomed secrets now dimpling with delight under the glittering sunbeams. The breath of flowers and pungent odors of the pine forests are mixed and mingled with the salty sea air. The palms wave in the breeze and great live oaks drowse farther down there on the plains, making great splashes of shade where the cattle rest, or stand and eat the tall lush grasses. I hear the faint sound of tinkling bells from the distant herds landward, while far below me comes up to my willing ears the music of the sea, soft, tender, and strangely sad, in its moaning sounds, which move me and stir my soul, and which cause me to listen, to hearken for a voice from the depths that will tell me the cause of its grief.

Then, when the spirits of the wind with deft fingers draw the filmy veil of vapor across the sinking sun, blotting out the fair scene, I light the lamps of my nest, draw the curtains, and forget the world of mystery and its moans outside

in the commonplace but very reasonable and desirable affairs of life and a good dinner.

"Where the hooded clouds, like friars tell their beads in drops of rain." Indescribably thrilling was the dawn in all the newness of a day washed clean, as the dripping clouds rolled away and the morning came fresh and bright as the first one, when God said "Let there be light," when the dawn took the pale, sombre dying night in her fair arms,

CALIFORNIA LIVE OAK.

flung her gleaming mantle abroad, and darkness, the dawn's twin sister, rested in the warmth and glory, the brightness and peace of the newborn day.

I felt new and young myself as I stood with windswept garments reveling in the splendor of the day's awakening. Sails flashed here and there like birds on the quiet waters. There are dim blues and greens enough to satisfy you; and you could certainly draw your inspirations from pictures seen here but never equaled, as portrayed on canvas. A witch-like light, evanescent as one's pleasures, shows brightly here and there, chasing shadowy forms fleeting as they are beautiful.

I find I have a greater reverence for this world of ours, as I have the time to study her moods, and understand more fully the wonderful harmony that exists, that soothes inharmonious thoughts and irritating counter currents of human influence. I imbibe the atmosphere of this place and feel strengthened by the forces of nature about me. Soothed, calmed, and quieted by the peacefulness, as well as stirred by nature's fury, each mood leaves its impressions that are to be remembered, that will come to me again and again, like an echo of music, long after the strings are silent. Just as the murmuring sounds from the pine trees heard in my dream-haunted slumbers last night will abide with me, the soft, tender cadence mixed with the visions seen here will never quite die away, I think, until the great and last silence overtakes me.

My mind has gathered serenity and quiet in the wide spaces, aye, wisdom which according to Socrates "is for the silent places, not for the mobs." And I am learning to agree with the things that are. The philosophy of contentment I am wrestling with now.

I remember having read some time that happiness is incidental, not an aim. If so, are we not all seeking the incidentals? The accessories help make the picture and what would life be without incidentals and accessories. I have wanted but one thing in this world. I think therein lies my happiness. I may yet learn that it is not necessary and that I am selfish in my desires * * * *

I thought when I wrote the foregoing that by this time you would be reading the finished letter. I gave you an idea of my mornings and my evenings at El Nido. After I had written the last page, I went through the beautiful forest for a stroll. Unconsciously I wandered farther than usual, down toward the valley, lost in meditation and scarcely observing where I wandered, until I found myself upon the highway. A sound of horses feet came to my ears and almost instantly a man on horseback came around a bend in the road. Can you not understand that my heart almost stopped beating when I recognized the rider was Bert Wilder? He

pulled on the reins, slowed down and was passing by when a flash of recognition came into his eyes.

"Surely this is Miss Livingston?"

"Yes, Mr. Wilder—wherever did you come from?"

"I am away from the city on my vacation with some friends. We are in tents over yonder," pointing to another range of hills crowned with giant redwood trees. "We hunt, fish and are energetic or lazy as we choose. I did not care to fish, thought I would enjoy a ride this lovely morning. But tell me what are you doing so far away from the city and alone in the forest?"

"Like yourself I am enjoying an outing. Am also lazy or energetic as I choose. My home for the present is up there on that crag overhanging the sea. No, you cannot see the house but it is there with a cook, my maid, and my aunt for a chaperon."

"And do you not feel lonely?"

I felt I must begin acting; the staging was good. It might do very well for a scene in Robin Hood, so I answered, that I had begun to feel restless and a bit lonely, but that I must try to be content as I had planned for a stay of a month or more.

"Why, we had thought of staying here three or four weeks also," he said. Then, after a pause, asked, "Might I not call? I would love to see you and your home on the cliff."

"I shall be delighted, Mr. Wilder, to have you come—it is a long time since we met; we must renew our acquaintance. You know do you not that I have been away from San Francisco for two or three years and have lost track of many of my old friends."

I saw a puzzled look come into his eyes—he was wondering I think if I knew anything of his marriage; he was not married when I saw him last, as you perhaps know. And I fancy Ruth, in her first flush of joy and subsequent unhappiness, had perhaps never mentioned my name to him as I was away at the time. If so all the better. I would wait and allow him to explain if he so desired.

"If it will not interfere with the morning ride, lead your horse and come up with me, as I am farther away than I am accustomed to go when alone."

We loitered on the way talking of old acquaintances, of my travels, until we reached the little house on the hill. He was very generous in his praises as we sat looking out over the waters.

"This is simply heavenly," he said. "I think I could live here forever—if only—" he paused.

"I know," I replied, "how you feel. If only the heart were satisfied and had its desire."

"You understand and appreciate?" he said.

"I have thought so when I sat here in the glorious moonlight nights and watched the shining silvery path leading across the waters. And in the forests also, one needs a companion who appreciates and sympathizes, you know."

"I wonder why you are alone—your aunt is too old to accompany you, or to be a companion suitable for your young life."

"I know of no one here. I wanted two or three—they are somewhere in the world—who would be with me if in California. But I am not easily suited. Solitude is far better for me than the company of people who cannot enter into my moods, or appreciate the things I love."

I thought of you, Edith, and of poor Ruth also, and a sob almost escaped my lips. My eyes must have been rather moist—he gave a quick glance of sympathy.

"I think I know," he said softly, then arising continued—"I have made rather a lengthy call and must not encroach on your time."

It was near the luncheon hour, so I begged him to remain for auntie's sake, if not for mine. I told him she was anxious to hear from the city. She did not know Mr. Wilder or his history—she has been living East for several years, but knows a lot of people in San Francisco. Needless to say, he stayed and it was well on in the afternoon before he left.

"May I come again?" he asked with the pleading look in his eyes Bert knows so well how to use.

"I should think I had been remiss as hostess and an old friend if you failed to come, and soon," I replied in my most persuasive tones.

Well, dear, he has come and gone several times, staying until auntie has ideas in her head. She does not know he is a married man, and thinks it would be proper for him to fall in love with me, as it is her heart's best wish to see me married. I have assured her that his people are of the best, which is true, and that he has money enough, which I do not particularly need, as you know. So she is satisfied and not as anxious about the matter in reality as I am. I hate my part, yet I must not falter for Ruth's sake.

I am off for a ride with Bert now. We are going down to the meadows * * * *

Listen and you will hear, with me, the lark with the earth tinge upon his back and its hidden gold upon his breast—our California lark—you know and love its notes—which is an embodiment of song, gladness and contentment. Aloha. Love for the day and hope for the morrow.

AILEEN.

XXXIV

"That man is wise among us, and hath understanding of things divine, who hath nobly agreed with necessity."

I have had a surprise, old boy, one that has stirred me mentally more than anything that has happened for ages. I wired Fred to meet me in Jalapa, as I had no desire to go back to the City of Mexico. He was a little late in coming, for I had about finished viewing the charming old city and the suburbs—a portion of which I wrote you. When returning one evening from a jaunt in the country, I found Fred at the hotel. He looked well, but seemed nervous. After chatting a while I said: "You do not seem in a very tranquil frame of mind. Is it because of the fair senoritas?"

"Don't be a donkey because you have been traveling with them lately," he said rather testily. After a pause he continued: "It is not a senorita that disturbs the uneven tenor of my way—but a senora."

"Oh, Fred," I broke in, "you of all men—and a married woman, too."

"Yes, and you of all men will be interested also about a married woman when I tell you that I have traveled from the City of Mexico with not only one but two senoras and one I shall turn over to your tender mercies very shortly—the younger—I'll be generous," and he smiled.

"Don't be mysterious. I have had a steady diet of mysteries for weeks—give me something not disguised with mayonnaise dressing."

"Well, brace yourself, my friend Frank, for the surprise of the tropics. By the merest chance, in the City of Mexico, I came across two of our countrywomen and one was Ruth Wilder—your old friend!"

Well, Jack, if a few hundred volts of stray electricity had struck me I don't think the shock would have been greater.

"Whatever is Ruth doing down here?" I asked. "Is it a case of more mystery?"

"Not of mystery but of devilishness, from the little I can glean from a heart-broken woman. Ruth has said but little or nothing, I might say, but her maid, who is a widow, is not so secretive and as she is rather a shrewd person, she understands the case pretty well I think. She has told me all she knows. There was a cousin of Wilder who was at their home in Monterey. Her child was born there and there is some mystery the maid cannot fathom. At any rate Wilder has cast Ruth adrift. He left her, and she, heart-broken and humiliated, is traveling. None of her old friends except Aileen Livingston knows where she is, at present. She was delighted to see me and asked eagerly about you. When I told her I was to meet you here, she said she would come, too, if I did not mind—that one place was as good as another to her if only she could keep traveling. She is sweet and gentle and does not intrude on one's time or patience, so I could not refuse. I hope you won't care."

"I would if it were anyone else, but it would be brutal not to exert ourselves for the sake of that poor little woman. I could never have believed that Wilder was such a beast."

"We will not discuss him. Get ready for dinner and we will meet her without further comment at present," replied Fred.

Jack, my old pal, I have never seen a woman change more in two years than Ruth Wilder. It makes my fingers crook with longings to choke the man who could mistreat a woman like Ruth. I have never seen such a look of unutterable sadness and woe in anyone's eyes before. She tries to bear up bravely and when she attempted to say something about not being well and traveling for her health, I simply said: "Do not talk of it now—I know all that is necessary and what I do know does not redound to the credit of Bert Wilder."

"Let us not talk about what he has done. I want to forget if possible," she said, and the tears sprang to her eyes.

She turned quickly that I might not see them, but I know too well that she still loves the man who has forgotten his vows to her. You have told me little in your notes; if you know more write me. If not, forget that I have seen her, or know that she is here.

And now I will write you of our journey to Vera Cruz.

On leaving Jalapa for Vera Cruz I was delighted to see a Pullman car attached to the train. I hurriedly stepped upon the platform, with pleasant anticipations of a comfortable seat in the car, free from dust, smoke and other ills. A colored porter met me at the door.

"Can we have a seat in this car to Vera Cruz?" I asked.

"No sir. This car, she do stay right here," he replied.

"Well, if 'she do,' far be it from me to interfere," I said, so meekly and patiently we all went into the next car, which was even before starting comfortably filled with people and smoke. Ruth entered into the spirit of the thing with very good grace. When I tried to explain that there are no cars exempt from smoke except the Pullmans, she said she did not mind, it was a new experience; and added in a pleasant vein of humor:

"I have learned a good deal in the short time I have been traveling in Mexico and I never thought I would like to be a man until I traveled in this country. But to be a man and to smoke cigars and cigarettes, and have nice, yellow-tinted fingers, to wear a sombrero and a look of felicity that cannot be imitated—well, the idea of reincarnation has its charms, and—beatissimi hora—when the time comes I may then understand and enjoy."

The train sped on through a region clothed in a gorgeous mantle of tropical hues. The road clung to the mountainsides and at times we seemed to be floating along on the tree-tops. Then we had glimpses of the plains checkered by plantations of sugar-cane and the fields of coffee, where the bananas tossed their broad leaves in the winds and cast a cooling shade on the tender young coffee trees.

We flew through forests where the trees were laden with great hanging baskets of moss, orchids and vines, and the bright red lance-like leaves of the ambitious Castilian corn which, scorning the earth, takes root in some broken bit of bark or crevice in the mossy old trees, helped with their vivid coloring to make a picture which even nature in her happiest moods could not improve.

There were multitudes of horseshoe curves and a wonderful track where we could look a thousand feet below and

see loops and curves of the road showing through the green mists of the trees.

Then I saw the Sugar Loaf—Mt. Cerro Gordo—where was fought one of the hardest battles of the Mexican war. There, too, were views reminding me of the Palisades of the Hudson. Lower down I saw the thatched huts of the natives, shaded by palms and cocoanut trees. We went over a vast tract of land of three hundred thousand acres belonging to one family.

It was a sort of shock to me to leave these scenes of unparalleled beauty and rush out of the witchery of waving palms and dense foliage to some yellow sand-dunes, where the fences are only sand fences such as we have on the Pacific coast line, that keep the sands from shifting down and burying the track.

A sudden turn and I saw the placid Gulf of Mexico stretching toward the east, while westward ninety miles away, Orizaba, seemingly only a few miles distant, loomed up grandly in the soft light of the setting sun. And we were in Vera Cruz.

My stay was short in this yellow-fever-haunted district which possesses few attractions for the average traveler. There is a charming plaza and luxuriant Alameda, where under the shadows of the cocoanut trees we watched the throngs of people and saw the zopilotes, or vultures, those uncanny birds which are the street scavengers, circle and light on the rounded dome of a church so close to the plaza that the stench arising from their roosting place, even though so high above us, permeated the atmosphere of the street.

We visited the water-front and saw the great ships and the lighthouse, once the tower of a church, which sheds its light over the waters to those who go out to sea. A library in a convent below sheds another kind of light on life's voyagers, both serving their purposes. I saw the old fortress of San Juan de Ulua, which is so constructed that in case of trouble or mutiny among the prisoners, it can be flooded in a few minutes.

The Alameda, the curio stores and the mosquito bites I remembered. The thick netting over the beds, heavier than

cheese cloth, was endurable for a time, but I wondered what it would be to sleep there in July. I cared not to tarry long in this city, founded by Cortez in 1519, which was about thirty-two years after Americus Vespucius landed at Tampico, further up the coast, whose name the New World bears.

The dread of mosquito bites, and the longing for pure, clear water filled me with a desire to leave the city, where pure air is unknown and everything drinkable comes in bottles. The array of bottles standing so thickly on the

FOUNTAIN AT ALAMEDA, VERA CRUZ, MEXICO.

table in the dining-room of the hotel was startling when we were ushered in. At first glance it seemed more like a bowling alley than a dining-room, but I learned later that the local water is considered unfit for use. So I folded up my conscience, labeled it good intentions, and ate and drank that which was given me, unquestioned, as a grim spectre in yellow haunted me, for yellow fever stalks abroad ever on the alert for victims.

Out under the pitying stars, later on, I looked up and saw the Milky Way, and sighed for a pint of celestial cream. It would have been worth all the bottled liquids in Vera Cruz, but, being so near sea level, and the stars so far away,

I stifled my yearnings and, retiring, pulled the drapery of the shrouded three-quarter bed closer about me and forgot all things for a minute.

At least it seemed only a minute to me, when I was awakened in the middle of the night by a bare-footed barbarian, who laid his hand flat-heeled as he banged upon the door with it. My decadent city intellect could not reason why it was always necessary to start from every place to go anywhere or nowhere in Mexico, in the night time, or at the traditional hour which is darkest just before dawn. Breakfast is unknown at the caravansaries in the early hours, so one must take chances, and it is usually an even toss up of "heads you win and tails I lose."

A wise boy carried my grip to the station two blocks away, but he took me twice around one block and charged a dollar. However, he was kind enough to show me a restaurant. It was so crowded that after waiting half an hour and getting nothing, he informed me I must not wait longer if I desired a seat in the cars, and so hurried me away.

I barely succeeded in securing a seat before the train pulled out, with me a most willing passenger, though fully conscious of the aching void that was eased a trifle later on, for there are always fruits of some kind sold at the larger stations.

My last remembrance of Vera Cruz as we sped away in the dim light, is of the zopilotes fighting with a driver of a meat wagon for a portion of his load. These street cleaners or scavengers do not belong to any union. They are at work through all the hours of the day, and also those of the night when they can see. There is no every-other-day sweep-up for them. Their lives are valued at five dollars each, or until recently a fine of that amount was imposed upon anyone killing a bird. Faithful in their work, their bills are small, even if the scents are numberless.

Back toward the City of Mexico I passed over a different road and one that was a marvel of skill after the first forty miles of plain with nothing attractive but the view of Orizaba. Then we entered a picturesque country.

Here, as in the region of Jalapa, one revels in tropical vegetation, fields of sugar-cane and coffee groves. The chat-

tering monkeys and screaming parrots that once infested this region are rarely seen now, the shrieking engines and roar of the trains being too much for them to endure. We crossed massive bridges and whizzed through cañons luxuriant in tropical splendor.

At Cordoba, sixty miles from the Gulf, the finest fruits in Mexico were offered for sale at the station. There were guavas, pineapples, bananas, oranges, pomegranates and chirimoyas—the fruit of the angels—that was not quite to my material taste, but the oranges I found delicious, as were also the bananas. Cordoba—meaning the tropics, or the border of the Tierra Caliente—is too near Vera Cruz for a health resort, but Orizaba has a fine climate, is charmingly situated and being above the hot lands is a resort for the sick and well from Vera Cruz.

After Cordoba we climbed upward through the wonderful Metlac Cañon, where are some thrilling curves, breath-taking chasms and curved iron bridges, until we stopped at Orizaba, a favorite resort at any season of the year. The name signifies "Joy in the Water," and the streams and cascades show it is appropriate as well as poetical. I too, found joy in the water when I had bathed and had drunk, for the water was good, and that was another cause for rejoicing.

I found here one of the best hotels in the Republic with delicious French cooking, and the "habitaciones comodas y ventiladas," otherwise good rooms and well ventilated, were comfortable indeed in comparison to some of the cell-like rooms I had found elsewhere, with bare tiled floors and mattresses and pillows only a trifle softer than the floors.

I could well understand this city being a favorite resort for the enervated people coming up from Vera Cruz. The situation is fine and the clear running streams, and clean pretty little city are worth a visit be one sick or well. History tells us that it existed before Cortez came. Clinging now as then on a terrace above the "hot lands," amid ferns and flowers, it rests peacefully among the sheltering trees and gives of its best to the world-weary and the worn.

The mind of most of us partakes of the witchery of the surroundings and here I felt it keenly. The moonlight, the

stars, the fragrance, the harmony that came from a strange language interwoven with music and stringed instruments, filled the air with a sense of rest and a charm unknown and unfelt in our colder climate. Here the balmy airs are always blowing cool and sweet above that sheet of placid water so far below, flashing in the summer sun. The feathery palms wave, the brooks splash merrily in their rocky beds, the sky is bright with changing hues, beautiful in the mystery of blended colors, and cloud shapes that take form and float away, sailing over the glistening snow fields of those mighty peaks, away from a troubled world of care and sorrow.

The cares of life and its environments slipped away from me as I dreamed away a few blissful hours amid the tropical splendors. I imbibed the true spirit of the country and was content to be idle and the place will haunt me for many moons yet to come.

When I journeyed from the beautiful city a succession of exquisite pictures lay spread out before me. There were valleys and mountains that from Orizaba's eternal snows ranged down in fairy-like undulations in the dim distance; from the cold death-like stillness of that white crest, lower and lower in mystical waves, these billows of earth and stone receded until they reached the warmth of the Tropics, lower still until in the far east dying in a fairy-like mist that seemed to weld together the earth and sky, I knew lay the Gulf of Mexico.

Fair as was the vision I turned my face westward toward the dear old Pacific. We were speeding on toward the City of Mexico, through the exquisite La Joya Valley, where were vast chasms and precipices, and narrow shelves where the train crept, along the Barranca del Infernillo, where the waters formed their self-hewn channel hundreds of feet below the railroad. I looked upon aerial hills and vales and illimitable waters, and on to the utmost verge where earth and sky were wedded and up to the mountains miles in height, and from a dazzling snowy ice field I saw a detached bit of ice glint in the sun which fell like a flashing star into the mists below.

There were long detours, sharp grades, curves and breath-taking chasms until I feared we would plunge into some of

those fearful depths, and the thought came over me of dying in a foreign land, especially where one's remains are subject to eviction for non-payment. It is a good country to travel in, but I felt I would rather die in my own, and the lines came to me:

> "Better when work is passed
> Back into dust dissolved, and help a seed
> Climb upwards,"

than to be as naught elsewhere, especially as naught here. I did not want my dust mixed with the chocolate colored ashes of these natives, nor did I want to help sprout tobacco or pulque plants, and thereby encourage evils I fain would exterminate. I would far rather when I return to dust enrich my own acacia trees than be only a weed to end in smoke.

But I was soon shunted from the Tropics and the little towns, sleeping in the Tierra Caliente, that seem centuries away from the world we know. Still on and from the higher hills we passed into the temperate zone of the Mexican plateau, and I found myself soothed and in a more congenial frame of mind, as the train rushed into the City of Mexico, perfectly satisfied with my visit to the south lands, and felt that I was ready for the homeward journey.

As the birds turn northward in springtime, or the weary horse awakens to renewed energy the moment his head is turned toward home, so I, now that my migratory instincts are satisfied, gladly turn my face to my own country.

A perfect jangle of emotions were mine as I left the old city. There has been so much that was strange and awe-inspiring—so much that was soul-wearying, and also much that was unpleasant. Hardships and fatigue have been mine, but all were worth it a thousand times over.

This land that is full of marvel and of mystery, has left unforgettable impressions that are pleasant, instructive, satisfying, and the exquisite pictures of the Tropics, the mesas and mountains, the life of a people so different from ours, are to be remembered with pleasure and delight.

I shall recall the sanctuaries of science and sacredness as well as the old shrines aureoled with mystical associations and remember the rose-red teocallis that lie in the earth, which are

now the foundation for the Cross of Christianity—the Cross that was put up for those dear old pagans, who could not at first understand—do their descendants now, I wonder?—the symbol of peace that was raised by the cruel soldiers of the Conquistadors. Be that as it may, the same Cross of Christ that was created over fallen temples and sacrificial altars existed centuries before Cortez planted it upon the salt-sown foundation soil of the Teocalli. And before the Aztecs ceased the practice of human sacrifice, the Cross was carved upon temples at Palenque. Among the ruins of Nachan, a city existing two thousand years ago which was explored in 1787, in a temple the Cross was found.

There were temples and sanctuaries for their gods, and the mingling of pagan rites with the emblem of Christianity gives food for thought. Out of the darkness of past ages into the peaceful present, where each one is allowed to worship according to his understanding, one cannot help but rejoice that the abattoirs of the gods who conquered and sacrificed at will, through their agents, whose worship was gore, who delighted in the cutting and slashing of victims, whose hearts were torn from the quivering bodies—are things that belong to a past that is gone forever.

The temples and images of these old pagans impress the traveler who cares to delve into the buried past, and some things will live in memory. My mind will often hark back to places that impressed me most—Cholula, Mitla—and some detached evidences of a strange people, and a strange religion that worshipped distorted idols, beasts and reptiles.

I will not soon forget a ravine where, amid a tangled growth of wood, the coffee trees and mangoes interlocked their boughs, the dense foliage shutting out the sunshine, I was shown a large boulder whereon was carved a reptile. It lay sprawled over the immense stone, and was carved so faithfully that the scales upon the body seemed real, and the claws on the feet, the wide open mouth, were horribly realistic. Some mystic signs were engraven there also. The sun-glints played upon the polished green leaves and made the red coffee berries seem brighter. It was a beautiful bright world above, but below this radiance were

the green and mold of the damp earth, spread upon the boulder, and the reptile in the darkness, representing the shadows and gloom that speak of an age and a people who worshipped there. These are impressions that haunt me, and make me all the more thankful that I am living in the twentieth century.

The remnants of past ages make Mexico interesting, but do not interfere with or stay the hand of progression. Conditions that are for the betterment of all, especially the poor, are in evidence. And looking hopefully toward the pure sapphire skies and out over the boundless mesas, I see in fancy the stern fingers of the cactus pointing in grim silence heavenward, seeming to say: Look and hope. And a gaunt figure with bare brown legs like some great bird, stands out in bold relief with a red serape about his shoulders. He takes the straps from his forehead, throws down his heavy burden, and raises his face to the skies, in unconscious entreaty, waiting for something—he knows not what. Heaven grant that the present century may bring relief and lighten his load of toil and ignorance. * * * My patient Jack, I am sending this, my last letter, as I am speeding homeward toward you. I had letters in Vera Cruz which caused me to change my plans. I will not go to the Orient as I expected. Fred has decided to go on from Vera Cruz via Cuba or whatever route pleases him and Ruth. I may go later. It is not business that is bringing me back, so you need not smile. There are matters wherein other people are interested which demand my immediate attention. Fred and Ruth seem to be very companionable and I fancy they will enjoy being together, both having felt the pangs of unrequited love, and so will find a comfort in each other's society.

As for me, I shall see you very soon, and I may tell you more than you now know, but I may not find you in the mood to listen. We shall see. But at least you and I can talk sometimes, while we smoke our pipes, of my visit here. I know I shall want to tell you of places visited in the land of the Toltecs and Aztecs, places and pictures that have a charm of their own of which I have not written—of peaceful skies, of shining lagoons and wide illimitable plains;

of tropical verdure, of twilights and the glamor of music, and the fragrant balmy airs; of nights that were radiant with glittering stars glimmering in the quiet waters which gave back the star-glints that shone in the deep blue vault above our dear old world, for in the halls of retrospection memory will revel in scenes that are unfading, that will hold me in silken meshes, for without remembrance, as the shadows longer grow, and life lengthens, travel were useless, unprofitable and in vain.

FRANK.

XXXV

"Lead me, O Zeus, and thou, Destiny, whithersoever ye have appointed me to go and may I follow fearlessly."

The plot thickens. "On, ye brave." Edith, I am riding on the crest of a wave of excitement, and feel sometimes as I have, when riding my horse at his best speed, along the beautiful roads with the wind blowing strong against me, while I reveled in the bracing air, matching my strength against the strong blast.

I have been back in dear old San Francisco for some time and have seen Bert Wilder quite often. He is indefatigable in his efforts to see me. I cannot allow him to come to the house too often. He has confided in me and finds me more than kind and sympathetic. You understand? The same worn-out platitudes, that have served from Rameses down and deserve to be embalmed or cremated, and retired to an obscure niche in some remote Columbarium, have been given me. He has told me that Ruth became jealous without cause because he was kind to a widowed cousin of his and left him; that she has refused to have any communication with him and that in order to permit her to have her desire granted he will get a divorce on the ground of desertion; that he could not bring his mind to do it even for her sake until recently, for he hated publicity of the kind.

Oh, Ananias, reincarnated! That I should listen and be almost persuaded! Edith, this man is a marvel. He will sit and tell me things I know without doubt to be absolutely false. Yet so strong is his personality, his hypnotic power over those he comes in contact with, that everything seems plausible. In fact, I believe he hypnotizes himself, and actually thinks that he is the injured person. Did I not know Ruth—know the whole story—I would be inclined to doubt her.

But as it is, I am more interested in this affair than anything heretofore in my short but eventful life. So I am a

docile pupil—I am learning something new all the time. The study of a unique character is new and I am trying a little of the magnetic, hypnotic business myself. I am going on the homeopathic principle that like cures like. But of the night-blooming cereus blossom of his love—which is his for the moment—I have no particle of sympathy or patience. I think of Ruth and wonder how she can care, but will not discuss the mystery of mysteries—a woman's heart—which only a woman and God can understand.

In order to facilitate matters I have cut the Gordian knot and arranged a trip to the Grand Cañon of the Colorado with some friends and have asked Bert Wilder to accompany me. I told him I needed a delightful companion like himself to make the excursion all I had imagined it could be. He took the bait like a hungry trout.

It was rather early in the spring for visitors, but the time suited me better all things considered than later on. So we went on, a merry party, changing cars from the main line to the branch road that took us to the Cañon. As we sped on toward our goal a magnificent sunset colored the sky, that put to shame all the pitiful efforts of artists who try to put upon canvas the splendid colors that nature blends into wondrous beauty. Then the sun sank and night cold and dreary set in, as we journeyed on over a slightly rolling mesa with no suspicion of the Cañon we were eager to see.

In the darkness we stopped and, descending from the cars, were piloted some distance by a boy with a lantern. There was snow in patches on the ground and the wind was biting cold, for we were seven thousand feet above the sea. A door was opened and we found ourselves ushered into a quaint log cabin inn with wide-open fireplaces and great blazing pine logs, with comfort radiating from them and a warm welcome from the bright flames. We found our rooms well warmed from the chilly night air, and a genial host and clerk who seemed to anticipate our wants when they announced that the evening meal was ready.

Later on I was asking the clerk questions concerning the Cañon, when he said:

"Here is a man who can tell you better than anyone else what you desire to know." He spoke to a hardy old man in picturesque attire, mentioned his name and I said:

"I know who you are, and my trip would have been incomplete had I missed you."

I found him peculiar and imaginative beyond the bounds of reason concerning himself and his adventurous life in the Cañon, where he has lived for over nineteen years. He told me of his love for it; that it was his home and had been when it was practically unexplored. The snows that were heaped up in patches on the ground were no whiter than the beard that covered the old pioneer's face. But the fires of an unquenchable youth shone in his eyes. It was worth while to come, if only to hear this man talk of the Cañon, of its grandeur, and its fascinations that have taken possession of him or held him enthralled for nearly twenty years. It has so filled his life that he cares for but little else.

He told me stories of the cliff-dwellers, of their houses, barnacled like swallows' nests in inaccessible places, of his own cabin on the rim, of the incomparable views that, in all the years he had lived there, were always a glorious mystery and each day fresh with the charm of a new discovery.

It was not what he said or the manner of description, but he gave me the impression of being almost a part of this incontestable marvel of God's footstool. I was so carried away by his description of the Cañon that I agreed to go down into the chasm on the morrow. The old guide's enthusiasm made it seem but a trifle as we all sat chatting cozily in front of some great blazing pine knots in the open fireplace. Later on, when sleep stole over my weary senses, a sort of dread seemed to possess me at intervals when half conscious, and I wished that I had looked down upon the trail before arranging for the journey.

A cry of "Fire!" awoke me to something real and more dreadful than imaginary things. It was as dark as the traditional Egypt, and freezingly cold, but the thought of fire at the hotel, where every drop of water is hauled from Williams, sixty-five miles away, was terrifying. I sprang out of bed, unlocked the door, and was unceremoniously thrust back

by a stoical Japanese boy who said, in a lower tone, "Fire," and at once proceeded to build a brisk fire in the small stove, while another boy going through the halls crying "Bre'fus," gave me a clear understanding of the situation. I nestled back in bed, and waited for the second call for breakfast, and for daylight.

In all the attempted descriptions of the Grand Cañon, no one, I fancy, Edith, has ever written, no matter how vividly or enthusiastically, even a portion of what was in his soul. I know I felt there, as I have elsewhere, the futility of an attempted faithful description.

I have seen the best and all of the most wonderful scenery of our own country, and have also seen the wonders of the Old World. I have stood upon the top of Cheops, Egypt's grandest pyramid; have looked down from the dizzy heights of the Jungfrau and Mt. Blanc, in Switzerland, and have trodden the snow fields far above the picturesque fiords that nestle among Norway's mountains. I have wandered among the ruins of Thebes and Baalbek and viewed from the summit of the Acropolis at Athens, Parnassus' snowy heights, Hymettus and Marathon in the distance. I have also stood upon the verge of Glacier Point in Yosemite and Inspiration Point in the Yellowstone Cañon; have mused upon Calvary, Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives; yet, nothing I have ever seen impressed me in the way this Cañon did. It is so unlike anything else I had ever beheld. How, then, would it be possible for me to give you more than an idea of this, the most wonderful in its way of anything the world possesses?

Here may be seen or fancied all the beautiful, grand or appalling things of the whole world. All the best in sculpture, painting or in architecture cannot compare with what God the Great Creator, Architect, and Builder, put in this wonderful chasm. Here color reigns supreme, and holds sway as it does in Yellowstone Park, only in this Cañon the distances are so great that color, however intense, is softened or lost in the purple immensities of air.

In the early morning I stood in front of the hotel on the rim of the chasm that dropped beneath my feet down and down for four thousand three hundred feet, and from the

fascinating, yet terrifying depths, I looked far across to the mystic chrome-tinted brink, thirteen miles opposite from where I stood. Shafts of light pastelled the sky, and below those paths of light were masses of vapor, soft and beautiful. Farther down the shadows, deepening into dark and dreadful depths, gave me some shivering, uncertain moments.

But we had made arrangements the night before to go

GRAND CAÑON.

down. Bert was especially solicitous and saw the guide about the best horses and the smaller details. Had I waited until morning I might not have had the courage to go down into those awful depths; but am rather certain the result would have been the same. I usually have the courage of my convictions and have never been called cowardly or addicted to nerves.

A hurried breakfast and I soon found myself attired in a divided skirt and anchored on the back of a mule, following

the guide with Bert close beside me down into the Cañon. The trail was worse than any I had ever experienced. The trail up to the Mer de Glace, in Switzerland, and the trails in Yosemite were not so dangerous, for here the trail was icy and covered with snow a part of the way down. A single false step or slip, and I knew too well what the consequences would be. It took the whole day to make the trip. The trail winds by tortuous and devious ways and turns for five miles into the perilous depths.

Tortured by aches and pains, fears and misgivings, and then in moments of rapture forgetting all save the sublime, the solemn and grand scenes that met my eyes at every turn, raised me to such heights of enthusiasm that life seemed of but small concern. There is such a bewildering confusion of strange, unique, and appalling wonders in those depths, where the spirit of cosmic tragedy holds sway and an atmosphere of awe, and one of woe also, sends a thrill of pain through one's being. It was a day that will be remembered while reason holds sway, and I shall be thankful all my life that I had the courage to make the trip down into the chasm.

I stood on a shelf hanging over the Colorado River after we had lunched and rested from the ride, and looked into the abysses half veiled in a thin blue haze that extended on and on, deepening away until lost in the distance. Then I glanced up to those vast walls where were terraces and pinnacles, wave upon wave of solidified color, reaching out into boundless space—a mighty ocean caught in its turbulent fury and stayed by invisible forces.

All the exquisite colors of the rainbow were reflected in its depths. The beauty of the tropical skies, and the changing effects of the glow of the Aurora Borealis were caught and imprisoned in the ebb and flow of this petrified, storm-beaten, mystical semblance of waters, whose profound stillness filled me with terror mingled with rapture, that only those who appreciate and love nature can understand.

I know I was hypnotized by the Cañon's vastness, and by the magic of the pale blue mists, half veiling the temples, cathedrals, walls and bastions that show along endless shelves where the armies of the whole world might find lodgment.

I was helpless and overpowered by its beauty and its mystery, as it stretched away in erratic windings for miles and miles beyond the uttermost power of vision. The ineffable beauty of this prodigious furrow ploughed by the Colorado River moved and stirred my whole being. It made my eyes sting with unbidden tears, and evoked an involuntary sob that startled me into a realization of the emotions that chained me a willing captive, to the witchery of its magic spell.

At last we reached the brink, worn and weary physically and mentally. I was thankful I had escaped from the perils of the trail unhurt and more than thankful for my day in the Cañon, which holds within its abysses a weird, tangled, bewildering vortex of supernal and undreamed-of impossible scenes, of a real and unreal lower world—scenes that haunted me through all the hours that came with the night when fatigue and sleep stole my weary senses after the dreadful ascent from those fearful abysses, from the sepulcher wrought and fashioned by the agony of ages.

All that night my spirit hovered over that wonderful chasm, over those marvelous terraced steeps. At times I was once again down in those vast silences. Then I stood on some pinnacle discovering fresh colors—gold and glistening blues intermingled with vivid reds, chromes and greens. All the colorings of the earth and sky which are centered there, with the mystical tints of the ocean in the distance that had so impressed me during the day, were still with me in my dreams.

The Cañon's beauty, its awful solitudes, were still vivid in my mind when I stole out in the gray dawn, watching it turn to gold, when the sun sprang over the rim and stabbed the gloomy depths with shafts of light, melting away the vapors, lighting up the deep red sandstone and tinted marbles that flashed and scintillated in the bright rays. That morning's beauty, the glamor of it, the majesty of the scene spread out before me a panorama of color, light and shade, mingled with celestial beauty, will never be forgotten.

Bert and I had many walks and rides during our stay at the Cañon. Often we would wander away to some point of interest, and every place in the vicinity of the hotel seemed

worth while. We would loiter along, discovering something new or unexpected, or seating ourselves on the rim—on the very edge of the world it seemed to me—we would talk or muse in silence, away from the crowd and tongues that vexed the soul, while we looked out across the Cañon. Far as the eye could reach it stretched in sinuous curves away and away into infinity. Across from where we sat on a certain cliff, I saw the blue line of forests on the opposite brink showing dimly above the strata of pale yellow stone, with a tumbled world, sloping down, down from the far-off ancient banks of a river now nearly a mile beneath.

There were strange, grotesque, fanciful upheavals and phantasmal forms. I watched the play of light and shade; saw the sun strike deep into the torn and ragged scars that were cut in the face of the cliffs, brightening the pink and red of the limestone into deeper shades, and showing the waterways that might have been fashioned by zigzag streaks of lightning, as in confused wanderings they wound around pinnacles and buttes down into a labyrinth of chasms and impenetrable shadowy depths, to where the river lies—a river that I know is foaming down there below all this tangled web of limestone, sandstone, gneiss and quartz that lie in indiscriminate confusion, yet are so harmonious, so sublime that I often closed my eyes, which ached in looking at the wonderful mirages that showed kaleidoscopic effects in shifting scenes and colors.

From every point of vantage visited I found it was the same, a series of surprises, a wonder, an apocalypse of grandeur and glory, before which my brain reeled in the mere effort of contemplating the inexhaustible forms of Nature's architectural carvings that filled this crinkled, curled old chasm, winding in zigzag sinuosities, a length of seventy-five miles before me and melting away beyond the power of vision.

It is impossible to measure distances or give an adequate idea, or to guess the size of certain objects pointed out. A tiny bit of the flashing river four thousand feet below me, seemingly only a few hundred feet in length, was in reality six miles long. I had, however, no wish for details. I preferred to feast my eyes upon the phantasmal forms of rock and meditate, for it is a place for thought and silence.

The Cañon so deeply worn and scarred by the conflict of cycles stretching back beyond one's imagining was old, perhaps, when Noah sat and whittled and planned the ark, or Adam learned the art of subterfuge. The sun shone on these mesas encantadas even before the pueblos of the cliff-dwellers, like determined reminiscences of the past, clung in inaccessible places, from which the dwellers crept like ants from their aerial retreats, or before the ancestral ape stood erect.

The place was full of brooding memories, and the silence awful in its intensity, lay in the vast sunken world beneath me. I have stood upon the top of the trembling crater of Vesuvius, and breathed the air of the wind-swept deserts of the Nile; have seen the river Jordan and the Dead Sea; have heard the thunder of falling icebergs from the Muir Glacier, and watched the icebergs there and at Taku Inlet drift away in the waste of waters spectral as dreams, and I have seen the confusion of spouting geysers and wraiths of vapor from the chaotic underworld in the Yellowstone Park, that sends the boiling, foaming jets skyward, with clock-like regularity. But all that I have seen seemed to be but a sort of preparation for me, that I might more fully enjoy this, the greatest of all of God's grand labyrinths of wonders.

Someone has written about our people "doddering abroad" to see scenery incomparably inferior to our own. Granted that this is so in its way, yet I think those who have traveled, who have seen, are those best fitted to comprehend. So I felt as I saw something of the thousand miles of harmonious colorings and carvings in this deep cleft that stretched away to the horizon's uttermost rim, and nearer me saw mountains floating in the blue voids, showing peak, turret and cone, with no visible anchorage, in vivid coloring of marvelous brilliancy, which softened in the distance into a soothing harmony of colors, through atmospheric influences and refraction.

It is a world unlike any I have ever known—a world of changing, evanescent lights, elusive and beautiful as memory, and of colors that run riot from the depths, up and up to the uttermost verge. It is so vast, so glorious in its distances, wherein are such wonderful mirage effects, that one imagines

great cities and armies are passing and repassing. Seemingly ships were sailing on smooth waters, with their shadows plainly seen in the blue depths.

A charming marvelous pageant lay over against the opposite bank from me, and lower down were vast stretches of plain in death-like silence and isolation. Then there were other bright groupings, showing a very miracle of climatic glory, that gave me an unparalleled scene and filled me with ecstasies like the sound of some exquisite melody, soul-filling, and satisfying. It was a requiem, a hallelujah — a desolate ruined world here, and a radiant glowing world of beauty there; each in turn speaking to my heart as no words could do—"Sermons in stone" indeed, with strange, soft, weird music stealing up from those strangely disquieting depths. It is the voice of the winds among those crags that sobs and moans and then changes into symphonies sweet and solemn, dying away into silent benedictions, until one's heart is filled with a pain of the music and the solemnity of silence.

The beauty and grandeur of this silent yet shifting animated glory, swathed in soft ethereal vapors, is overpowering in its impressiveness, and is homage-impelling; sternly real, yet spectral as a dream. It is the soul of all the architects, of all the painters and sculptors ever known, for in its depths are all that can delight the eye or stir the imagination or emotions. It is a geological apocalypse that touches and holds one in thrall; half mystery, half revelation, where language fails and description is commonplace.

With me it will be a matchless spectacle, whose pictures will always be a part of myself, whose awful grandeur, while inexpressible, leaves its impressions on the soul. Its echoless silence, symbolical of the eternal silence coming to us all; its world of shadowy forms, stretching like turbulent waves in masses of color rioting against the rim of the world—an enduring and deathless memory, filled with divine pathos—filled me with nameless longings that were indefinable, as I sat in the presence of this Cañon, where Nature has done her uttermost, with her unerring brush, blending the sensuous, brilliant, ravishing, harmonious revelation beneath me into a grand, joyful overture, and allegro, through which runs a vague uncertain minor chord of sadness and pain.

Such were my impressions. What the Cañon is to others I know not; there are people, doubtless, too prosaic, too hopelessly sane, to understand, to feel, to know; but for me it will always be a luxuriant lotus-dream of matchless beauty, and lovely as the hope of a life everlasting.

We encountered some wrecks and washouts on our return and had some thrilling escapes wherein my solicitous friend showed the utmost concern as to my mental and physical condition. I was very timid—for the time, you understand—and he seemed to revel in his strength and courage. Providence and Bert watching over me, I had nothing to fear. We came back over the gray billowy desert where grow the interminable cacti and gaunt yucca trees, which stand in weird distorted shapes; coming on and on over the gray sea of tar-brush, greasewood and smaller varieties of shrubs. At Needles we left the Colorado River, where, after its wild and thrilling rush, it struggled out on the desert wastes of sand. At Yuma and the Needles after a touch of civilization it turns wearily away from the haunts of the whites, and, finding its way through a vast region of arid lands, it slowly and sadly drowses along until it loses itself in the Gulf of California.

I felt something like the river after the exhaustive glories of the Cañon. I rested in placid content, feeling a complete satisfaction after seeing this one of the world's wonders, and knowing in my heart that I had done something toward avenging Ruth, for if Bert has no love in his heart for his wife, I am rather sure he has not very much left in his heart for the one who charmed him away from her. I find this letter so long and I have been so impressed with the Cañon that I could not tell you of the comedy while in the presence of such awe-inspiring scenes; it does not seem right to allow anything trivial to intrude. Expect another letter soon less instructive but a diversion.

In the rush of events, after my return, I did not send you the above letter soon as I expected, but will add the following as a sort of postscript:

"When the roses of the summer burn to ashes in the sun,
When the feast of love is finished and the heart is overrun."

When the feast of love is finished. Aye, there's the rub, Edith. What will the harvest be? At least if I understand myself there will be no sheaves of regret for me to bind. I am Delilah in one sense. Sampson may keep his locks—but perchance he will not be so strong in his vanity and conceit. Studying the man's character, he is puzzling to me who has made a study of mankind. This man has so much of the nature of a chameleon in his make-up I can better describe his mental status and temperature by sending you copies of some notes written to me since my return. I will give extracts of one letter written me since, after I had attended a reception. "* * * It made me wildly jealous to see you with others, and the strangest feelings took possession of me. It was not only jealousy but a sense of utter loneliness. It would seem that we misunderstood each other and I am glad to have the opportunity to tell you how unhappy you made me.

"I am very impetuous, dear, and I may have declared the secret of my heart to you at an improper time; but you will forgive me, won't you, when you know it is all for you? Oh, darling, if I could only be with you tonight, and take you in my arms and caress and love you as I wish, I should be willing to die.

"Think of my impudence! I, a poor, lonely, miserable man, and you a lovely, beautiful woman, surrounded by all that makes life happy and the world bright—why should I ever hope to be aught to you but a friend? I should not dream of bliss. Yet, dearest, the word friend sounds so hollow to me. You will forgive me for loving you so passionately?

"I do not wish to be forgetful of the past nor unmindful of the future. I have been so utterly lost to all the world for so many months that my heart seems ready to burst its bonds and fly to you of all the world for comfort, solace and love. If it is too hasty do not chide me. If you can not reciprocate my feelings, forgive me; and know that you are the only one except one to whom my heart and being has ever been wholly tendered.

"Your letters are conservative but I shall endeavor to see you soon. I want to talk to you alone where I can open

my whole heart to you and then if you still think me unworthy I shall humbly submit. Until then, know that each day my thoughts are with you and you alone are my only comfort."

You see, Edith, he acknowledges having loved. "Except one," he says. Which one of the two you and I know of? Am I conservative? One must be skillful, you know.

Another note will tell its story:

"Your sweetest of letters came to me an hour since and dinner over finds me in my back office, doors locked, lights full blast, and my whole being thinking, dreaming of you. Ah, my dearest one, little you know what a pleasure your letter is to me. In all the wide world you alone can make me happy. I had thought of going away for a year, but you are the magnet that keeps me here. I cannot think now of leaving you. I cannot leave my only, my best friend to 'try to forget if possible'—how worse than useless for you to ask it. I may be able to make you understand---some time."

Another note entitled AN IDYL:

TO ONE WHO KNOWS.

Beneath the moss-fringed oak, one summer noon
I lay, reclining on the fragrant turf
With buttercups and daises pied bedecked.
The meadow-lark with amorous passion filled
Broke the soft air with joyous songs of love—
All else was still. The thrilling sunshine streamed
Through the gnarled branches overhead, and lay
Warmth-giving on my heart. Soothed by the scene,
Sleep stole upon my senses, and visions fair
Born of my wealth of love dawned on my soul.

Methought the sunshine fair, caressing me,
Changed to a lovely tree. Magnolia blooms,
Deep-bosomed, ivory-white, sprang from each branch,
The fragrance filled the air, and—as I dreamed—
The luscious sweetness stole into my soul,
And the fair tree bent low its stately head,
And through my parted lips breathed to my heart,
The deep, sweet promise of its own fair life.

The touch awoke me and my opening eyes
Found the soft eyes of her whom all the world
Can never from my heart unclasp.

Shivering with joy I drew her to my heart
And her sweet self fulfilled the glorious dream.

Is it not nice to be called "Sunshine," Edith, Rather better than to be the "rain crow" and represent a drizzle or

downpour. I had a fancied engagement, hence the above letter.

Were I not convinced that Bert is above the vice I would think he had acquired the opium habit and was seeing things in his dreams. Edith, it is enough to make one sick of the whole world of men. How poor Ruth and doubtless the other dupe—if she were—would have hung on the honeyed sweetness of these notes. They had their quota, I presume, from his prolific pen. But I am not a busy bee and am not storing up this kind of honey. Hear ye him: "Your letter was very sweet and kind, dear, but at the same time there is the lack of that delicate expression of warm passionate love which alone will make me perfectly happy. I do not, however, expect you to love me now, but I trust and pray that I can some day feel that all your precious heart is as wholly mine as I now know mine is truly yours. I do not love another, sweet. I know you mentioned another name to me, but I do not love her—I love you and you alone.

"I shall not take it that you believe me in many things, for your letter indicates that you do not. At the same time I cannot believe you will be so unjust to me as to place me and my protestations upon the common level with other men. I regret to admit that my sex are as a rule too prone to deception and duplicity in their intercourse with the opposite sex. But I try to be different from the majority of men. I assure you, my dearest girl, that when I tell you I love you better than any other woman on earth, I mean every word I utter, and to be doubted is one of the most cruel blows which can be inflicted upon a faithful heart. For as sure as I live, as sure as I write these lines, just so sure is my heart wholly yours and the acme of my life will only be when I can feel and know that you are all mine and mine alone.

"I doubt very much that I shall ever attain that sublime degree of happiness but I am going to try, nevertheless, as long as life remains, for, sweet one, you are the only woman in all this world I yearn for. I can't blame you for doubting me when I know how untrue men are as a rule, but time will prove to you that I am just as devoted, just as truly yours as it is possible for one being to belong to another.

And when you will allow me to see and talk to you, I am sure you will believe me, no matter what the doubts may be."

Edith, what manner of man is this? Does he hypnotize himself into the belief that he is in love with me? Is love so changeable, so evanescent that it can be changed like a coat or a collar? Is it because he isn't sure and is determined to win? Conquest is his desire and I wonder how long his fever-heat passion would last were he once certain I had succumbed to his magnetic love. AILEEN.

XXXVI

"How sweet to think of one who knows you for what you are, for good and evil, yet loves and ever loves you for the better part!"

I have been traveling so constantly, Aileen, since I wrote you from Florence, I have had no time for writing until now, but will begin with my impressions of Constantinople. My pulses quicken yet when I recall my first glimpse of a minaret and an old turbaned Turk, as we sped on in the Orient Express over plains so often dyed with blood. Then came a stretch of water with low edges. The Sea of Marmora! Is it possible?

Next the Seven Towers once used as a state prison, but now transformed into a more useful, though incongruous railroad station, desecrating, if one might say, the last remaining vestiges of the Greek emperors. But the chaotic mass has succumbed to the infirmities of an evil and misspent life and is doing good, though sullenly, because of the invasion of the Giaour in the shape of the train.

I get a glimpse of the Seraglio for an instant stretching out into the Bosphorus. The old Seraglio of which I have read, a place which tells of love, murder, ambition and torture through so many ages! Dark trees and walls, gilded kiosks, green lawns and sombre, gloomy courts! What scenes have been enacted there! I recall with a shudder the dark tunnel, which it is said, opened from under some gorgeous chambers and led to a postern out at sea, where troublesome officials and fickle beauties were disposed of. The Bosphorus is silent as the hideous mutes who attended to the disposal of the victims. Silent all; only we know that death walked with life in this charming abode, where all of life's best and its worst, love, despair, hope and agony, endured for a moment. The tragedies of Eastern life were short and cruel. I give a sigh of relief, for the Seraglio exists no more, save as a monument of the past. The Sultans are now, in a measure, amenable to the force of law.

Out in the struggling scarecrow crowd of yelling Greek, Italian, Turkish, French, and amid a scene of squalor, I am extricated by my dragoman and I find myself in a carriage, jolting along over the most execrable road I ever was shaken on in my life.

I pass a real mosque, where are stone water troughs as if for cattle, but I see the faithful Moslems, performing their ablutions. They wash the hands and feet, and let prayer atone for the rest. I see a walled up arch and Corinthian

MOSQUE OF SANTA SOPHIA.

columns of greenish marble, some sculptured Roman eagles in the cornice, and other things impossible to remember. Then on and I know this is the Golden Gate, Aurea Porta; I pinch myself to see if I am awake. The Golden Gate! Am I dreaming? Yes, for a moment of you and our incomparable Golden Gate, and I wonder at my indifference. I do not feel the spasm of delight experienced when Rome's ruins and historical walls first greeted my vision.

When I landed here, it was March, cold and dreary, with biting winds. East, the Orient!

It seemed to me, born and brought up under our sunny skies, that I had found the long-sought-for North Pole. I had seen no more vestige of winter in Italy than at home; a trifle colder, possibly, yet charming. But here it seemed more real, for it snowed one whole day. Think of it, Aileen, a real snow storm! No make-believe storm of cut paper showered down upon the stage while the wind screeched back of the scenes, equally an imitation wind. But this was a fierce, biting wind and great snowflakes fell so thickly that it was a semi-twilight all the afternoon.

After the storm I saw in turn, the Golden Horn, Pera, Galata, the drawbridge that binds Europe with Asia, civilization with barbarism, seraglios, mosques, palaces, domes, forests of minarets in bewildering array, St. Sophia, wherein some of the greatest and most solemn, as well as the most horrible scenes have been enacted from the Byzantine emperors down until the empire ended. I was not impressed by this church. It is hard, grating in fact, in some respects. There is no poetry, no illusions, no dim perspective. The arches are simply arches. They did not strike me as the mysterious esthetic beauty of the splendid interior of St. Peter's. It is possibly because the light which comes in strong from innumerable windows, offends by its disillusioning harshness.

Thoughts of the memorable massacre make me shudder; and the filthy, repulsive Moslems lying about in silence or calling upon Allah as they recite the Koran are not conducive to peace and meditation. A little of the poison Medea spread seems to linger yet in the atmosphere of this church, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, erected by Constantine and dedicated to Wisdom, but used for feuds, murders and glorious pageants, and now void and empty.

Once before this altar, now cold and bare, every emperor had knelt either to be crowned, married, or to ratify solemn treaties. Spiritual and earthly potentates, scenes innumerable and indescribable have been enacted here. No nation in the world ever admitted political and ecclesiastical conflicts into a church as did the Greeks.

Now the service of Allah fills the church with Turks in numbers. There are imaums, mollahs and muezzins to call to

prayers from the minarets, readers of the Koran, and a multitude of semi-officials. The place is sacred to the Moslems who look not very kindly at us while they lie about, or do acrobatic feats, falling prone on the floor while calling upon Allah. They are of Mahomet's flock, and go unquestioned, though my clean shoes must be covered with dirty old slippers before I am allowed to enter. The red fezed rabble are kept

ENTRANCE TO BLACK SEA.

away by my dragoman. Without him I would not be safe for a moment. Therefore I gladly passed out to view more pleasant places.

We went by boat on the Bosphorus up to the Euxine or Black Sea. It was a novelty to me to see the veiled women huddled like a flock of sheep on the front part of the boat. All classes were together; shrouded by curtains. No man is allowed behind the curtains, except venders of sweets and drinks, or the official who takes the tickets. These were of great interest to me, and the absurdity of the system, allow-

ing one or two men behind the scenes, struck me as ridiculous.

The picturesque Asiatic shore claimed my attention, with its chain of palaces, villas and towns, whose walls are literally bathed in the waves of the Bosphorus.

The most interesting of all was the Dolmabaktche palace, joined to a mosque with its white marble steps laved by the shining waters. We went through the palace; it was gorgeous in rich marbles, wood carvings, paintings, and priceless rugs and carpets from the Sultan's own looms. Great marble baths and plunges were in evidence, yet lacking in other things such as we are accustomed to have in the most ordinary houses. Further on were other palaces and the eccentric windings of machicolated ramparts and round towers. Still further up, where the stream narrows, Xerxes placed his Bridge of Boats, and here the Crusaders passed. And high on a hill I saw the American college! And I thanked the dear Allah for the sight. Here the Cross, peace, science, and the languages. There the Crescent and the shattered remains of the blood-stained fortress of Mohammed II.

Painted wooden villas, or kiosks, one-half with perforated outer shutters for the harem, are on the Asiatic side. I thought if Bert Wilder were here he certainly would be on the Asiatic and not the European side, and if so how easily matters might be adjusted. If only we were educated to the harem idea! But to us the idea is horrid and repellant. Emotions and the play of feelings, the result of our civilized life, are unknown here. It is an indication of mental culture with us. The Turks do not possess or understand as we do. They have not progressed. We have gone forward, not they.

Then the shores narrowed to the gates of the Black Sea, the sea which it is said is never quiet, it being the home of the winds that circle and surge and come as I felt them, biting and stinging, from the frozen fields and Russian steppes. The gates, however, shut off the winds to some extent, for here it is but a stone's throw between Europe and Asia. The shores of Buyukedere, Therapia, and ambassadorial palaces meet my gaze; while mentally I see the Argonauts, Jason and his Argives sailing out to Colchis in quest of the Golden Fleece. The Euxine Sea and its black waters! Armenia,

Georgia beyond, Circassia, Odessa, the Sea of Azoff, and the inland ocean, the Caspian! Localities and bygone names and scenes pass and re-pass and surge up to my memory; real and traditional. Here is Therapia, and the glittering crowd of diplomats, secretaries, embassadresses in carriages, Arab horses, veiled women, and dainty Greek ladies with large dark eyes. Launches full of people go by, and larger boats plough their way through smooth waters. Therapia will linger in memory as sweet and clean, dry and beautiful.

From there I went to the Sweet Waters of Asia with my dragoman, who secured a good boat or caique, and a man to pull the bow oar. The waters were thick with the caiques; they looked like insects skipping about. There were boat loads of veiled women with never a man, save the rowers, not even a eunuch in their company. I saw only one eunuch while there. He was a beastly looking fellow and was with some of the Sultan's family.

A brother cannot go with a sister, a son with a mother, a husband with his wife, in fact, any male cannot accompany the women, except servants or eunuchs, the division of sexes is complete. The scenery, however, was very attractive. The women in the ferejah, or cloaks, pink, blue, purple and red, some heavily veiled, some in thin white veils with rouged cheeks and kohl-darkened eyes, and the men with the red fez and long dark surtout, were everywhere; others with turbans were dressed in white, some in red; Greeks in full white drawers and embroidered vests, with weapons thrust into the scarfed waist. Christian and Moslem pass and repass like scenes in dreamland.

I am living over it as I go through the Dardanelles. You know the low hills that run down to the narrow stream which seems to close in and shut one off from further progress. At least that was my feeling as we steamed along. The mist clearing away, however, showed higher snowy ranges lying further back, gave more pleasing pictures, growing more beautiful as we went through the Ægean Sea, and among the fairy like islands of the Grecian Archipelago, and then we are at Piræus. I breathed a prayer of relief, for the boat was crowded, and the odors of stale humanity from people who,

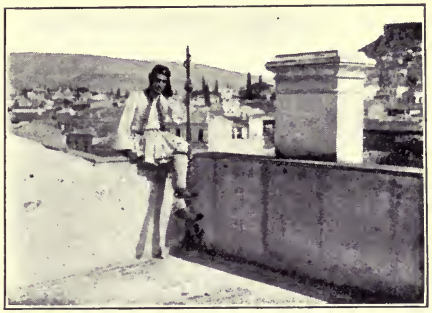
though well dressed, told plainly of stuffy sleeping rooms where dirt, foul air and perspiration were permanent tenants. Good-bye to Greek boats forever! I mentally take oath never to be tempted again, and now for Athens.

I am drinking wind as drinking wine and feel a strange exhilaration from the warm fragrant breeze that comes from the Ægean Sea, which sends little clouds of dust along the white road that leads to the bay of Eleusis, where the processions used to wind their way, where children carried flowers, and the priestesses led the sacrificial bulls to the temples.

My sketching materials and paper for writing are always a part of me in my wanderings. Hence I pen my thoughts to you when the mood is upon me. From the top of a hill I have feasted my eyes upon a fair scene, a long green stretch of valley, where the herds browse and the bees stagger with their weight of honey, gathered on the slopes of Hymettus. Groves of olive and myrtle, show in spots on the hills, and the young buds and blossoms send their fragrance up to me, for it is early spring in Greece. I shall only mention my visit, you have been here, and know what it means to me.

The Acropolis, the Parthenon, the Theatre of Dionysus, and the Odeon, Herodes Atticus, the Temple of Theseus, and the magnificent ruins, the marvels of sculpture. A few only have escaped the despoiler's hand. While here I have visited Eleusis and the ruins of the great Propylæ, where priests once offered sacrifices in honor of the goddess Demeter or Ceres. Pluto, Proserpine, the rhythm of the sea laving the tombs of Themistocles—what thoughts come to me! Persians and Goths and their destruction of the beautiful temples. The din of wars and high revel seems to come to me as I stand once again on the summit of the Acropolis for a last look. In fancy I hear the eloquent words of Demosthenes, thundering across Mars Hill, and the softer, sweeter tones of Paul, telling the Athenians the story of the one true God. Sophocles, Plato, Œdipus, the blind king of Thebes; Xerxes with his archers, the legendary camp of the Amazons, Aristides, Leonidas and Pericles, are far more entrancing to my mental vision than the every day life about

me. The degenerate Greeks, especially the soldiers, airy sort of warriors in short full skirt, braided jacket, white hose, and betassled slippers, are a faint imitation of ballet dancers. They revel in short skirts while women break rock on the roads, plough and follow in the footsteps of those who once worshipped the goddess Ceres, who once guided the plow and taught the arts of agriculture.



GREEK SOLDIER.

Sappho and her songs, the Isle of Milo, Mount Ida, Corinth, fair Olympus, all are memories now, Aileen. The Syrian coast, the Gulf of Smyrna, "The Crown of Ionia," Rhodes, the old town of the Crusaders, and Samos, the island that knew Pythagoras—what delightful recollections of them and the terraced hills, valleys and snow-capped mountains; of apple, almond and orange blossoms, the odors coming direct as if from my own home. The dear familiar sweets were wafted from strange unknown shores of the Ægean Sea and the bays along the indented coast line of Asia.

And now I am finishing this with the old town of Jaffa or Joppa in sight. I will send this on with the boat, and will follow this letter with another from the Holy City.

EDITH.

XXXVII

"Too deep, too deep, of the waters of love,
The beautiful woman had drunk in the wood;
The dangerous, wonderful waters that fill
The soul with wine that subdues the will."

My auntie avers that my way is not her way, Edith, dear, and that I will drive her to an untimely death by my wilful neglect of my home. You know she has full sway and manages the house as if it were her own. But she would like me to remain at home more than I do for her sake, more than the house. Still she is a bit afflicted with the old moth-eaten theory that woman is out of her sphere, if she concerns herself with aught but domestic affairs. I tell her that in this age of inventions, electricity, compressed air, prepared foods, and ready made clothing, only addle-pated women need concern themselves about household affairs all the time or devote too much time to needless things. It savors too much of the primitive man and the wickiups, when women were expected to do all the hard work. I think my house is a model of neatness.

Brain work counts in the management, you know. And why should I spend any unnecessary hours within doors, when, like yourself, I can frolic out doors to so much better advantage to myself, mentally and physically.

Since visiting the Cañon I concluded to try the Sierras. An altitude of seven thousand feet suits me, and I am up here for a short time. I am not searching for the lotus blossoms of the Nile in the mountains, nor do I look for edelweiss on the plains. Yet in my own dooryard at home the papyrus tosses its long gray hair in the warm sweet winds, as happy, green and luxuriant as it did in the old days on the Nile. And the red spikes of the snow plant up here standing like so many red-coated sentinels guarding patches of snow, and lording it over the pale sweet mats of Cassiopea and other star-like blossoms are worth more to me than all

the frosted furry gray bits of edelweiss in existence! So there is a fling at the bit of edelweiss you sent me.

You must understand that I think our mountains are unequalled. Here I am seven thousand feet above my home in the dear old city by the sea, with the great forest of sugar pines hundreds of feet in height above my head, and climbing the peaks still higher up, disputing the eternal snows crowning their crests.

In Norway, the timber line is four thousand feet; but here Nature seems to abhor rules, and is careless about lines or boundaries. Small wonder that people are children of Nature out here on the sunset's rim.

One day I slipped away from my friends and wandered alone, through the vast solemn woods, listening to the sound of wind-vexed boughs of the pines, tossing helplessly far above, while all was peaceful and quiet where I rested, on a great flat boulder at the gnarled roots of a giant pine.

The god of contrariety possessed me that day. I would not join a party in a picnic on Lake Tahoe. I wanted diversion of another kind, the diversion of being in pleasant company—my own—for the vexed spirit of some old pagan ancestor is crying out, striving to make itself understood—the spirit, I am sure, of some one bound by an inexorable law, deprived of the bliss of wandering, as I do, free amid matchless vistas of forests, and scenes of ineffable beauty. Under the patriarchal trees where the sounds of rippling water come in pleasing varying tones to the ears, while the heavy odors of the woods rejoice the senses, I found myself building mounds of stone—the pagan in me at work—commemorating something or marking a place for worship; and surely it was worth while. Here, where no sound of the outside world pulses up to my retreat, I look from my "Mizpah" up to the Cathedral Peaks, cut like cameos in the ultramarine of the sky, Nature's magnificent carvings, showing in the domes and graceful spires, sentinel Titans above the lesser mountains which lie beneath them, like tossed and tumbled frozen waves, left by the troubled throes of a world, when chaos reigned, and think it small wonder that human beings adoring the work of the Creator should

find themselves at times building monuments and heaps of stone, puny imitations of the mountains, consecrated by His presence.

I can have my heap of stone for my altar. So can every one. There are no reserved pews here, no sectarian trees saying this is the only way, but each and every shaft pointing heavenward in silence and in peace. There is no wrangling, no discords of varying opinions among them. I can think, meditate, pray and give thanks to the All Powerful and All Wise, without the disease of unbelief assailing me, and thus am at peace with myself and the world. I find myself gathering branches of the wild cherry, inhaling the fragrance of the pure white blossoms, and imagine myself back in the old days of the Druids, when the white robed priests cut the mistletoe branches and gave a piece to each household that evil might be warded from each decorated door.

The mistletoe grows far below me in the valleys and foothills, but these starry blossoms are better, sweeter and more to my liking so I shall weave a garland for myself, and fear not.

Splash, splash, ta-ral-ap, ta-ral-ap, the sounds from a small stream that ripples along its shining moss-lined way, born in some hidden spring further up the side of the cliff, reached my ears, soothing and restful. There are great clusters of azaleas, showing bits of pink flame in their blossoming beauty, lining the stream; and the sun filtered through the heavy foliage of the giants of the forest, and glistened on the glossy leaves of the lower shrubs. The warm atmosphere is heavy with a delightful harmless narcotic that is quieting and lulls me to deeper, sweeter rest, than the world elsewhere can give.

The sound of the winds among the "eld druid trees" comes drifting downward, like the sound of the surf on a world distant beach. It gave me a thrilling, the-world-is-mine sort of feeling, caused by the supreme sense of isolation, away from all of life and strife in the world below me.

I gather some clusters of azaleas and maiden-hair fern, and clasp the cool five fingered ferns and lay them upon the altar of friendship which I have built for you, Edith, and

for one other ! The dear, sweet, perishable ferns, which bathed their tiny root fingers in the waters of the stream that sings its way through the scented ways of bloom, send some of their fragrance blessing the waters in return for the life it gives to them.

Ah, dearest, amid these tranquil retreats, I seem to be met with a friendly spirit. I may never know the secrets Nature holds sacred to herself, yet in the movements of the leaves, in the multitudinous whisperings and strange workings of unseen forces, I know peace and love are being sent out to me in some strange, inexplicable way I feel but cannot fathom. There is nothing hostile, only a welcome, and a promise of peace within these mountain quietudes.

Far up in the air above a tiny lake that gleams like a gem amid its emerald setting, a sea pigeon poises on motionless wings and seems to be in harmony with my idle existence. The bird is waiting for something—its breakfast of trout, doubtless down below in the shining depths. And somehow I seem in an expectant mood, waiting for something to come into my life, that with all I have had to bless me, has seemed so far to be rather useless.

Yet how do we know that death will be any better? Will it make those we care for love us more, when we do not need it? Will it make our enemies hate us less when we do not care? What does it all matter? Why should I care about the time when my eyes are closed and the long dark tunnel to which we all are hastening shall shut out the light for evermore? It is while I know, and can appreciate the flowers, and the kind words, that I want them. After death I will not need or know.

I am roused by a soft footfall. I turn my head and see two great liquid eyes gazing at me through a tangled undergrowth of chaparral. A shy, spotted fawn is gazing curiously, but does not seem afraid. Then I hear the drumming of the grouse calling each other. I catch a glimpse of a humming bird as with a whirr of wings it flashes from one bright flower to another. The chipmunks chatter and scurry over the fallen trees or race along in quest of food.

I love to watch the denizens of the forest, and the aimless ants racing in mad endeavor to go nowhere, it seems, and to hear the jay birds quarreling and see the woodpeckers busy searching for the succulent grub under the rough bark of the sugar pines. All interest me at times like this, when I have found that my days have been insufficient and unsatisfying while turbulent longings fill my heart. When there are missing notes in Life's symphony, then I want to be alone and go out in the woods or the fields, where people think; we have nerves, in the cities, you know, Edith.

I find peace and harmony among things that cannot talk. It was talk, principally, which sent me out here alone today. There is a man, one of the party who came up with us. How he attached himself to the party, I know not. I believe he is one of those barnacles one finds in society, as well as in salt water. He has a tongue, and two pale, bleached, contiguous eyes that look like a picture I once saw of the Siamese twins—they are so closely connected. He revels in the sound of his voice, and that he subserves sense to sound never ruffles his placid content. He is one of those pests who always have a good deal to say, and in order to verify his statements, enters into the minutest details as to the day of the week, the month, the year, and the name of the person who said or did so and so. An exact diagram or map of the country goes along with the story, which always flounders in a whirlpool of nothings that leaves his hearers, or me, at least, in a mood for anything that is movable, or throwable. But he, I understand, belongs to the nouveau riche—and is tolerated.

But this self-satisfied person wished to remain with "Miss Aileen; she is so appreciative, you know." If only you could have seen him when I thanked him and said I was not strong enough to endure any company but my dull self, and I preferred to be alone.

He stared at me in amazement; he could not comprehend that anyone would refuse his company. He looked like some lone, stray maverick that had been lassoed and brought to a strange corral. He was positively bewildered at the idea that his presence was not considered a tonic and a necessity.

He is a loose-jointed, nervous runt, his words coming in a sort of weird chant, with an undertone or minor strain that is burdened with a sort of wail, which is as soothing to me as the sound of the fog horn at Point Bonita, and his philosophy of life is summed up in so many words winnowed from a mass of verbiage.

"I am living my life as best suits me. I may be wicked, but I enjoy my life, and spend my money which was left me. I am not able or willing to work. I have one consolation—when my money is gone, if it must go, there is the county hospital and a quiet time ahead where there will be nothing to do but eat and sleep."

Do you wonder I fled to the wilderness and have spent the day in solitude? I would not mention the incident, only I will tell you that he is to marry soon an up-to-date widow I have met, who believes in progressive matrimony as fully as she does in euchre. Having slipped the matrimonial noose twice, though yet young, a third term will not cause much of a disturbance in her mental make-up. Her politics and inclination permit her to believe in the third term.

I follow a trail still further up the slope; the air is heavy with the scent of sun-steeped herbs, and farther up, almost to the snow line, I hear the ting, ting-a-ling of bells and know that a band of sheep is grazing on the tender growth of shrubs, which are so dense I cannot see the herd. I resist the temptation of following it further up, for the shadows lengthen and the asters and tall, spotted lilies, growing thickly, beckon me to their soggy vales of pleasantness.

I am enjoying and breathing the atmosphere of an air stratum so high above the lower levels that I feel a sort of exultation. There is a newness here, a something that strikes me with a strange feeling, in the curious, breathless whisperings which come with the sway of the pine needles and hushed rustle of decayed bark on the trees.

A sudden stab of the silence by the thud of a falling pine cone accentuates the stillness; and in the solemnity of the heights, I seem to sense the soul of the forest—undefinable, incontestable, mysterious—which plays on my emotions and enthralls with its compelling forces. When the wind sighs

softly around the great gray boulders and moans up among the boughs, calling and whispering something, I fain would know, but cannot solve. Lost and found again in echoes of its own sighing, it comes to me like unspoken thoughts, that in some way we know come to us from others.

All through the day there has been a feeling of expectancy within me. The wordless music of the upper world seemed to be portentous of something coming, coming, which my material spirit cannot fathom. Nature crooning herself to sleep, as the dim evening hours come. Then a sound more definite comes to me—something different, sweet, elusive, faint, soft and dreamlike—a melody that was full of the most witching sweetness and touches the very depths of my soul with its pathos. Then there were notes, triumphant, clear, uplifting me into a new world—one of song. Then soft, solemn, heavenly music swept through the forest aisles, trembling with sorrowful reverberations, which set my heart and nerves trembling with the passion of it.

It sounded like the moaning banshee winds, around the old ruined tower at Glendalough, which I heard once, and was assured by an Irish guide, meant death. I shivered as the strange melody thrilled and wrung my heart. There was so much of sadness; it was full of minor chords, and cadences, with tears and heartaches in it, that touched my heart to the quick.

I hastened on in the direction of the sound. Gaining the crest of a hill after a depression, I saw a young girl sitting on a boulder, a short distance below me. A shaft of light from the setting sun pierced the thick foliage, and cast a warm light upon her hair, which shone a golden glory about a face, so beautiful that it startled me. "Good-bye forever," she sang softly.

She looked as if the springtime of love, the songs of birds, the fragrance of loquats and magnolia blooms had been with her all her life. She was like one of the fair sweet flowers herself in her young beauty. The gold of her hair might have been stolen from the acacias, the blue in her eyes was the blue of the forget-me-nots and heartsease. Her face was marble-like in its whiteness, except the soft wild rose

blush of her cheeks, and her beautiful mouth, with the lips curving deliciously in a true cupid's bow.

I stood for a moment waiting, as the last note died away, tremulously, leaving me filled with its melody. She arose and, looking upwards, I saw tears stealing down her cheeks. I felt as though I was an intruder, and thought to turn and go back unnoticed. But a movement sent a small pebble rolling down the path. She started as if in terror. I said: "Do not be frightened; I have been up here all day; there is nothing to fear."

"You have been out here all day?" she asked.

"Yes, I enjoy being alone—up here. I do not feel lonely; in fact I am never less alone than when alone, as we term it, when among such scenes as you see here."

While I was talking, she turned and brushed the tears away, striving to control herself. Her voice was sweet and tremulous, and in her eyes, with long lashes that veiled them when she looked at me, there was a depth of woe, a dumb pathos that thrilled me somehow with pity, though her young beauty would rather inspire admiration than pity. What sorrow had struck its shaft of pain in the heart of this glorious creature? Some impulse made me feel such an infinite pity that I longed to take her, stranger though she was, in my arms and comfort her. She seemed scarcely more than a child; one who needed to be soothed and loved.

"You are a lover of Nature, else you would not be out among the hills all day; I know, and I understand," she said softly.

"If so, then you know how good it is to have an hour or two away from the heartbeats of a tumultuous world, and forget if possible the passions that make or unmake those who wander amid the ceaseless turmoil in the great stream of human life that started with the beginning of our race and flows unceasingly from the past to an eternity in an indefinite future, to which we go joyously, or plod like beasts for a few moons. Then we vanish like bubbles to give place to others as frail, as hopeful as ourselves."

"You have learned something up here; you have time to think," she said wistfully. "Do you not think there has been something left out of the great plan of the universe?"

"What do you mean?" I said, strangely interested.

"Do you not think if God cared—about women at least—he might have arranged it in such a manner that we could profit by our mistakes? That if there is anything after death, save oblivion, it would have been so easy for those who"—she paused a moment, gave a little cough to suppress a sob that involuntarily escaped her—"who have solved the mystery and would, out of the love which could not die, no matter how happy, in a possible heaven—leave it all if God so willed, and come back for a little moment to warn, to tell us, if sin or wrong threatened?"

I was so astonished for the moment that I knew not what to say. In the instant her face changed; she smiled and said:

"I beg your pardon; this is not a place for theological discussions, but somehow you drew me on without thinking. I only arrived today, and came up the trail for a quiet hour."

"For which I thank you, and your songs—you cannot know how they impressed me; yours is a voice which you should be thankful for—it is a gift few possess."

"Thank you; I was scarcely conscious I was singing, and I thought I was alone on the hills."

"And I, too, thought I walked the path alone," I replied.

"The path alone!" she almost gasped, and her face grew deathlike in its pallor.

"Yes; is there anything so remarkable about it? There are no wild beasts, I think, in the vicinity; there are bears farther up, but not here."

The color came back into her face, and she smiled piteously.

"I think I am tired. Pardon me; I am not very strong and will return to the hotel and rest. Thank you, I am all right now; do not hurry on my account."

And she went hurriedly down the path. I thought she wished to return alone, so loitered on my way. I shall close this letter, now that the day is ended, but will say among a number of letters received there are two notes from Bert. Will give you extracts as usual that you may know how runs the comedy:

"My sunshine; I am so glad that I have coined a name that even thus faintly explains the light you have brought into my heart and into my life. I love you, I worship you, my sunshine, my magnolia, my love, my dear heart! Know there is one man whose devotion to you is intense—a part of whose existence it is to worship you; do not condemn him to despair."

"Your very short note came. I read and reread it. It was sweet to have a line from you, especially as it has seemed such ages since I looked upon your dear face and into those inspiring eyes. I do not understand the mysterious influence that welds our souls. I only know that it exists; I only know the moments of rapture I spend in your presence. I only know how slowly passes the time when away from you. I only know how I long to see you, and how I anticipate the time when I can be with you always, and feel that nothing can ever separate us. Life has not so many bright sides that I can afford to neglect this, the brightest of them all. Not always are we content if given the things we wish for; but sometimes we are, I know. It is our nature to aspire to the unattainable. When gained, it ceases to be the unattainable, it is true; yet the soul is never satisfied; its hunger is never satiated; its thirst is never quenched, and I think it well that it is so. Yet this cannot be true of congenial companionship. It brings content while ever yearning for more. It is satisfied, yet only so when the measure of its hope is filled. Keep the cup brimming and running over, and the human heart has found its earthly paradise!"

The unattainable earthly paradise, Edith dear; what mad star was in conjunction with Venus at his birth? He had the opportunity for an earthly paradise, and lo! the result. "When gained it ceases to be the unattainable." Yes, and the desirable, also, my ardent Eros.

A later note says: "I had my grip packed to come to you when fate intervened; but it shall not be for long, if it be within the power of human effort. The delay is great, and the time since I last saw you seems like a thousand years. Will the absence make your sweet self any sweeter when I meet you?

"No, I did not flatter you at all. I have often seen you look well, but never so beautiful as that last evening. You looked like a queen in your beauty. Your face was like marble—white without the horrid powder that disfigures so many. Yet it was not a colorless white. Your toilet was in perfect taste, that altogether I stood astounded! Did you not read it in my eyes? When I passed on to others they looked so tame and artificial and unattractive, that your vision in my memory grew brighter. Whenever I shall think of you, I shall remember you as you stood, beautiful and peerless, that night. Unless, indeed, on some future occasion, you shall surpass yourself and present a yet more fascinating picture. Yet I do not see how that could well be.

"My life pursues the same dull and uneventful routine. My time I spend chiefly with my books. I often wish for a companion, for it is dull reading or thinking by one's self, and wish that you were with me. How long must it be ere I can see you when I will, be with you always, have the same sweet joys, and follow the same delightful pursuits? Not long, I hope. And in anticipation of that happy day, I live, endeavoring to content myself with prophetic pleasures.

"And now one more sweet, but tiresome, perhaps, to you, reiteration of my love, my devotion to you. Why heap coals of fire upon my head by your constant doubts? Why will you continue to say such unkind things to me? Either I do not comprehend your language, or else your letter has some of the most cruel thrusts conscionable. I cannot and will not think you mean it all, and am determined that you shall believe and know, for I shall convince you of my devotion. The enforced absence has driven me to desperation. I will prove to you how true my poor heart has been to you. I know myself better than the world knows me. And if there is one trait of character stamped more indelibly upon my nature than another, it is constancy to those I love. Whenever you can believe thoroughly in me, you will have no such fears as you now entertain regarding my love."

My dear Edith, this has reached the limit of endurance; I must end this farce. Not for Ruth's sake can I endure to keep up a correspondence or a semblance of friendship. I

would hate myself had I indulged in a flirtation or been proud of my poor conquest, if it is one, as many would delight in. What I have done has been for friendship's sake and to try to teach a lesson to the man who could so cruelly desert his wife. Had he been a man who could love deeply or lastingly, I would scorn myself for the slight encouragement I have given him, as his letters prove, though he has the assurance, I think, to believe that I have been waiting for renewed expressions of his devotions.

I have been careful to send you copies of all letters of any importance, and equally careful about receiving him in my home. Have had auntie or someone else always present when he called. I have thought of possible contingencies, and except a horseback ride and some walks at the Cañon, we have never been alone. This has seemed to exasperate him, but there has been some trivial excuse always. I must write to Ruth soon, and I do not know what to say. She must not know of his make-believe passion for me. It would hurt her. I think he has no love for her in his heart. If he has seen or spent any time with the one she fears, I have not been able to ascertain. Do I hear you give a sigh and say, "Glad the letter is finished?"

AILEEN.

" * * * * * I laid my plan
And childlike chose the weaker side;
And ever have, and ever will,
While might is wrong, and wrongs remain."

My Dear Edith: I must send another letter at once. I feel like one of the moving figures in a bioscope. There has been such a rush of events in my life since I wrote you that I feel in my mental state a yearning for the quieting influence of your dear self. If only you were here! Aren't you a bit weary of wandering? Wouldn't you love to be here in my own cozy room, where you well know the world at large, even the angel of the household, auntie, does not intrude without special invitation?

We would rest on the divans and cushions, wrap the warm Japanese kimonos about our forms, while breathing incense, and the aroma of coffee I learned to brew while among the Turks. We would sip the coffee and Orient ourselves while

we told each other tales that would be of unbounded interest to a great many of our friends, if they could only hear.

I mean my Turkish room, modeled after one I saw in Damascus. I gaze now and then at a fine narghileh on a stand and wish that I could smoke! Wouldn't your mother be horrified at the thought? Auntie wondered why I had such a "thing" put in my room. I told her it might be useful some time, if I ever married a man who smoked. It would be appropriate and ready. She sniffed imaginary smoke and said:

"You expect to marry and bring your husband here?"

"Certainly," I said, "I shall never give up my home for any man—why should I? It is mine, and if I must lose my name, why should I lose all that is dear? If the man I love takes me, he must take the house, too. I am that kind of a snail, auntie; I carry my house upon my back."

At any rate, I am now looking out of my window and feel I have a right to love and hold fast to that which is good. I look down from the crest of the hill, which you know is one of the highest in San Francisco. I see the waters of the bay crisp and sparkling; and the great ships coming and going out through the Golden Gate. The gray ocean shows mistily beyond, and the beautiful hills rising in waves up from the farther side of the bay to Mount Tamalpais, fairylike, in the yellow gauze veiling the summit. And then I fall on my knees, Edith, and sobs choke me for a while.

Now I am quiet enough to write you after the storm! I told you that I felt there must be an end to the correspondence and the seeming friendship I had for Bert Wilder, and that not even for Ruth's sake could I longer endure his letters, which caused me so much disgust. He the husband of my friend; the father of a babe, and so heartless that he has made no inquiry about the child. He doubtless thinks Ruth is somewhere in the State taking care of it, if not at Monterey; I do not know. At any rate he is not aware of the intimacy of Ruth and myself.

I have not been at home to him since my return, but have been deluged with notes, and have sent word that I would see him.

I am something like a thermometer—am writing and getting up to the climax by degrees. * * * I wrote you the foregoing two days ago. Last night I arranged for Wilder to come, and had the stage set. He came, looking handsome enough to capture any susceptible woman.

"I am so delighted to see you back—it has been ages since I have seen you; you have been away so long," he said.

I will not dwell upon the phrases, but as soon as possible I asked him to allow me to tell him a story.

I told him I had known a part of it for some time; that a portion of it I would tell him, as it concerned some friends of mine. Then I told him the story of Ruth and himself. He seemed quite interested, interlarding sentences that were not complimentary to the man. At last I told him that I had adopted the child and would like him to see my adopted boy.

"I will be delighted," he said.

I touched the bell and the nurse brought in the child. He is a beautiful baby, and I could see a wonderful resemblance; I wondered if he could. Bert was complimentary, and said I ought to be proud of my adopted child.

"But," he asked, "how could the father or mother give up such a lovely child? You did not tell me they were dead."

I signalled the nurse to withdraw, then said:

"That is why I have sent for you tonight. I want to know the how, or why, of several things. "How," I asked, in sudden fury, "could you treat Ruth Wilder, your wife, as you have? And I would like to know who is the mother of this boy you have just seen, which is your own child, and born at your home in Monterey."

He grew deathly white for the moment, then recovered himself and said:

"So Ruth has made a confident of you and you have adopted the child which was left with her? It is kind of you, like your great, generous heart to do so. But out of your generosity, have you no kindness for me? I felt I had no love for Ruth, and in order to save her the shame of publicity, I acted as I did. We are all swayed by emotions at times. I was carried away for the time, and when the truth was forced upon me I knew not what to do, except the course

pursued. I did not want the girl to suffer needlessly, and felt I must make all amends possible."

"Yes," I broke in; "an honorable course to take your mistakes in your own home and heap sorrows upon the head of your devoted wife. That was honorable indeed!"

"The world's scorn would have been harder for her, I thought, and I promised the girl I would do all I could to right the wrong."

"What have you done in that direction? Have you tried to get a divorce and marry her, and give your boy a legitimate name and home?"

"I thought I might at the time, but I took a package to her, one sent in my care by her adopted mother, the night I returned to Monterey with Ruth. I did not think to give it to her until I put her on the train. I followed later on in the day, and though I went repeatedly to the place where we had lived and where she was to stay in retirement until I could get a divorce and marry her, I have never been able to find her."

"What was her name before she assumed the one Ruth knew, Mrs. Bertram?" I asked.

"I would tell no one else in the world but you," he said. Then, after a pause, continued: "You have her child and mine. I know you would never divulge the secret. I did not tell Ruth, but it might be as well for you to know, if you have adopted the child. Her name is Alice Heaton. Where she is, I know not."

"Alice Heaton!" I stared at him in amazement.

"Yes; why? Do you know her?" I could not speak for a moment.

"Know her? How could I know a girl like—like the one I am led to believe she must be? My acquaintances and friends are not—" I stopped for a moment for the right word.

"I beg your pardon," he said; "I understand, but she is not quite what you think—at least was not when I saw her last."

"Does the child look like its mother?" I asked.

"I do not think so. She has blue eyes and golden hair, and is very beautiful; in fact the most beautiful woman I ever knew, except you," he said in his softest tones.

"Never mind about me," I said. I was bewildered. That young girl the mother of the child in my nursery. This the father, and Ruth, my friend, wandering somewhere in the world—what a labyrinth of misery and the heartless cause of it all sitting in my presence with all the assurance of one who thought what he did was right, no matter the result.

"But I do mind," he said. "I would have tried harder to find Alice and perhaps would have married her had I not met you. I do not know; I will be frank with you. It is not possible for me to love Ruth, or to live with her longer, and my infatuation for Alice seemed to die as soon as she disappeared. I know that I have never truly loved but you."

I started up, so choked with indignation and disgust that I was unable to speak for a moment.

"Hear me, Aileen; you must and shall. I have waited so long for this hour. I acknowledge that I have not treated Ruth as I should; but am no worse than other men. I know not a few who keep up more than one establishment; and the wife is fully aware of it, but would rather live and enjoy the distinction of her husband's name than be known as a divorced wife. I felt I could not have the public know of my indiscretion or have Ruth endure the thought of my divided attention. It was best to end it at once, and I was candid enough to tell her."

"Yes, so I understand," I managed to say.

"I thought you would, and that is why I am telling you all; I want you to think and know that I am keeping nothing from you. I love you so dearly that I want to bare my inmost thoughts to you, and I tell you again that you are my life, my hope, my all! That I cannot live without you. With you and your love, I may be able to retrieve my mistakes. Ruth does not care, her affections are not deep, and the mother of the boy does not. At first she thought she could not give up the child; but I told her she must for the time being, that after we were married we could adopt the boy

and no one would be wiser. But she evidently has forgotten father and son.

"Dear Aileen, out of the greatness of your heart, you who have taken the child into your home, can you not take me into your heart also? Let me be safe in your love, darling; safe with my sunshine, my star, my guardian angel! Tell me you love me a little. I have lived on the thought, and the hope, though your letters and your modesty have prevented any expression that has been satisfying to my heart. I feel that the decisive moment has come. I am pleading for forgiveness of my errors and indiscretions. Help me to retrieve the past, and to be all I desire to be in your eyes. I can and will be, with your love, my star of hope, my heart's best and only love."

The decisive moment had come and the sacred vial of my wrath frothed up like a well shaken bottle of champagne. I cannot tell you all that I said. It has been the regret of my life that I did not have a phonograph prepared that you might hear it some time. But I told him why I had taken the child. It was not for his sake, but because of my friendship for Ruth, my friend, whom I loved nearly as much as I detested him.

"You," I cried, "ask my love? You who are unworthy to speak the word that means the opposite of anything your deceitful, treacherous nature can understand. I despise you, who are a thing too low and mean, too contemptible for any woman to honor with any kind of respect or regard. I undertook the task at poor Ruth's request—of trying to ascertain if you still loved your wife and the mother of your dead child. And with the vain hope that you would recover from your infatuation. Though I advised her as to the futility of it—told her even before I knew you so well that you were unworthy of her regard, but with her experience before me, I could not believe you were the debased wretch I have found you. How I have laughed over your protestations, your glittering bubbles of a semblance of love which look well on paper. 'Sunshine,' indeed! Well, I do not want the poisonous, night-shade affection you offer, despicable semblance of manhood that you are! I have done what I

have done for a weak, defenseless woman. But now, I want you to understand, that I am not to be contaminated by your presence any longer. Never again are you to come here or speak to me. I shall endeavor to make your wife know what you are, if it is possible, and disillusion her. I think I can when I show her your letters, but perhaps they were copies of letters you wrote to her and the other one whom I met in the mountains and learned her name, Alice Heaton, who, if appearances count, is suffering for her folly."

I paused, out of breath, I was so exasperated! Really, Edith, I had not thought the wretch would tell me all of his vileness, and then in the same breath ask me to help him share it. He had shrunken down in a chair while I was talking and pouring out my indignation in more words than I can write you. When I stopped he arose—he was trembling, whether with shame or anger I knew not. He turned his eyes upon me and there was such a baleful light that, strong as I am physically, and not a coward at heart, either, I felt a chill strike me like an icy breath.

"So, you have been amusing yourself with me all these months?" he said.

"If you so term it," I answered. "The farce of make-believe love is not a copyright for you alone, is it?"—my courage coming back with full swing.

"I have had one thought, one hope, while enduring your presence and fumigating your malodorous expressions of undying love—on paper—for I have had, besides enjoying the absurdity of it, the thought that if you cared for me in the least, that I was having a little bit of revenge for what you have made Ruth suffer, and I hoped for revenge also on the heartless woman whom I thought could desert her child. She has redeemed herself in my eyes, and no matter what her life may be, however deeply she may drink the dregs of sin or shame, where you have sent her, she can never sink so low as she would had she accepted you, the debased man you are, as a husband."

"Oh, Aileen! I cannot believe you," he said. The fierce look had died away in his eyes. "You are indignant; you look upon things differently from many women. You are

brave to undertake what you have. I honor and respect you for what you have done; and I love you, no matter what you say or think. You command my respect and my admiration. You are the first woman I have ever had to beg for kindness and love. Pardon me if I say that which has been tendered me has come too easily. There is nothing I would not do to gain your love, your respect. Put me to the test. I will promise anything that is within the power of man if in the end you will give me a kind word, and let me live in the exquisite happiness of your presence."

"Would you be willing to take Ruth to your heart again, if I could forget and forgive?" I asked, smothering my contempt.

"Yes," he replied eagerly, "I will do so at the earliest possible moment if only I may come to you now and then, and have the only consolation left in life for me; the consolation of looking into your dear eyes, of clasping your hand, or the ineffable bliss of holding you in my arms once in a while as my recompense for a duty, hard as it will be. But a duty that shall be faithfully kept because you ask it and because of my love for you, whom I worship. My queen, my strength, my hope! Say the word and quickly."

Edith, dear, I do not know that I was ever really angry in my life before. Such a transport of rage took possession of me that I positively forgot that I was not Goliath. I only remember that I sprang forward and took hold of his collar and forced him down in the chair beside which he was standing, with a strength I did not think I possessed.

"Do not stir!" I panted. "I think I will kill you if you do! You offer to take your wife back, if you can carry on clandestine meetings with me, you scoundrel! You want to lower me to your loathsome level. My God! If I were only a man that I might choke the life out of your worthless body! If I only had a brother or some one who could chastise you as you deserve, and brand you for the coward and poltroon that you are."

"Your words ought to be sufficient," he sneered, as I stepped back, and he arose and started toward the door. I saw it was open, though the curtains were partly drawn.

It rather startled me, for I thought the nurse closed it when she went out, and I wondered if anyone could have overheard us.

"Now, hear me," he said. "You have had your innings and my time has come. You have been kind enough to receive me, you have taken my child into your home. A few words to the club fellows will make it appear as your own. In fact I was so proud of your letters that I spoke to some of them about your friendship and our correspondence. Also your invitation to accompany you to the Grand Cañon. I believe you were away when the child was born. No one knows who the mother is. The rest will be very easy. It would be a good thing indeed if you were a man. The world forgives everything in a man—but has little or no forgiveness for a woman, especially a woman who is so well known and envied as you have been. It will be a sweet morsel for some people we both know."

The devilishness of the man struck me with full force. He went out with a smile on his face that was positively sickening in its diabolical meaning, and I—being only a woman after all—fell back almost senseless.

Almost my first thought on recovering myself—it was not long, for I am not hysterical, and fortunately no one came in—was something I had written either to you or Ruth, I do not remember which. It was this: "Greater love than this hath no woman than she who perils her reputation for a friend." All this have I done, whether wisely or not I cannot say. Certainly not if the coward does what he threatens, and I think he is the man who will revenge himself in that way if he can gain anything by it. But not for the sake of the dear world, its smiles or its frown, will I ever see or talk to him again.

If there are men and women who believe him I must bear it as best I can. I shall not falter or let Ruth know, and I will keep the child until she returns. It will be doubly hard to have it, though it is innocent and unconscious of its heritage. But with my whole soul abhorring its father, my burden is not light, my dear. Were I selfish I would say, come back, I need you! I am woman enough to want to lay

my head on your heart and tell it all over again. And child enough yet to want to kick and howl if only I might—if I could, be sent to bed supperless and forget it all next day—just as we used to do. It would be worth while, wouldn't it, dear?

AILEEN.

XXXVIII

"Sing a song of sunshine, sing it from the heart,
Life is filled with sweetness when love forms a part;
Sighs and tears forever such a song will drown;
Brighten up the pathway, drive away the frown;
All the world will greet you as you pass along,
If there's smiles and sunshine ever in your song."

It is springtime in Palestine—spring that comes in March as it does in California, and the quaint old town of Jaffa is redolent with the fragrance of orange blossoms, which are everywhere about the dear old town. The trees are almost smothered with the golden globes of fruit, and the masses of white blossoms. It is very pleasant after the snow and cold bleak winds of Constantinople.

I was told that it was too early for Palestine, but my first experience after landing at Jaffa was that the south winds had come and spring was here fragrant and sweet. The Mediterranean was quite smooth when I landed at Jaffa which was fortunate, for it often happens that it is so rough here that landing is impossible. There are no break water or piers. The steamers land in the stream and small boats transport passengers and cargo to the quay through some ugly looking rocks encircling a small bay which guards the city. There are only one or two openings through which the small boats enter into Jonah's Bay, and debarkation is hazardous at all times.

One's life and luggage seem to be of little consequence in the mad effort of the boatmen to secure the passengers and their belongings. The noise and confusion among the rival companies was amusing as well as distracting, but we were carried or hurled through the jagged reef by the surf and the excellent rowers, into the bay where the water was smooth enough to allow me to breathe and look up at the ancient city of Jaffa.

It was Joppa when it was a colony in the land of the Philistines, and the name meant beautiful. Whether the old name or the new the situation means it, though the town has scarcely lived up to it. In the days of Solomon this was a port, as now, for Jerusalem. As far back as the building of the temple, the King of Tyre sent timber from Lebanon. The old myths cling about the walled city and the bay. Andromeda, the sea monster, and Perseus still live in history and painting. A point of rocks was shown me by my dragoman as being the identical place where Andromeda was chained. Here also Jonah had his little tussle with the whale which lasted for three days.

There is much that is mythical about the old place that was destroyed and rebuilt time and again. The Romans, Cestius, Vespasian, the Crusaders, a brother of Saladin, Richard Cœur de Lion, were all interested in various ways. Now it is a prosperous town for the exports are large, and it is here the thousands of Pilgrims land yearly on their way to Jerusalem, besides the army of travelers who help to make the place lively.

Jaffa is high above the sea and the fair plain of Sharon, rich and fertile, stretches from it to Cæsare, Carmel, and the wavy, undulating lines of the Judean hills show in the distance. There is the road to Gaza and another to Jerusalem. In this quaint old town is where Dorcas lived and Simon the tanner plied his vocation.

There is one daily train between Jaffa and Jerusalem, which makes a bit faster time than could a pair of good horses. It has its advantages, however, for one has as good a view of the country as from a carriage or on horseback. The views were exquisite as we went on slowly over the lovely plain of Sharon; now green with fields of grain and clover, where the shepherds guard their flocks and play plaintive melodies on reed instruments to the wandering sheep and lambs frisking in the warm sunshine.

The warm, sweet winds, laden with odors of almond, peach and orange blossoms, fanned my face and filled the car with delicious fragrance. There were splashes of color everywhere amid the waving grain, and by the wandering streams

the great crimson blots showing where grew the blood-red rose of Sharon or anemones. Enchanting scenes were on every hand; valleys far more fertile than I had expected to find; rough, rugged hills, and the blue sea in the distance.

SHEPHERDS AND FLOCKS ON THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM.

I remember, among other villages, Ramleh, a walled city once larger than Jerusalem, but its glory has departed. There were fine orchards and palm trees growing in the vicinity. The soil is exceedingly fertile. I look and think of the songs of Solomon, for indeed the sun had looked upon them.

Winter had broken, the cold winds were not felt and the rose of Sharon gladdened the eyes. Walled in were the gardens of Judea, covering the sunny slopes, and the wandering winds carried the breath of flowers and the songs of birds to the sleeping sea below.

The road leaves the plains and enters the arid, stony hills, and high on a rocky cliff I was shown a cave where Samson lost his hair. We paused at Bittir, or Bethor of the Bible, where was the siege which lasted three years, and the thousands slain were so great that it was said the blood of the Jews reached to the nostrils of the horses and flowed down to the sea. The hills looked bare and desolate; no shrubbery, and but little grass is seen. A few gnarled olive trees grow in the ravines. Then we came to the plain of Rephaim, where the boundary between Judea and Benjamin ran; but more memorable for the rout of the Philistines by David.

Walls, towers, rounded domes, flash before my eyes, and we are in Jerusalem! Only a glimpse and my dragoman has taken me out of the strange, seething crowd and the babel of unknown tongues, to a carriage, and I am driven over a smooth road and into the city through the famous Jaffa Gate.

How different it seems to the city of my imaginings! The arrival by train was prosy and commonplace, but comfortable in its way. I found the hotel where I stopped modern and good, so the necessities of life were easily obtained in the old, old city.

With what conflicting ideas and confused impressions I wandered through the city of my dreams. A city that since my Sunday school days had not been to me like any other earthly city. But, while I was, during my stay, disillusioned in many respects, the interest never wavered. And there was little disappointment in all the various places I visited. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is of absorbing interest; but it is galling to see the Moslem custodians at the entrance drink, smoke and jest at the Pilgrims who, footsore and weary, prostrate themselves, kiss and weep over the Stone of Anointment, where the body of Christ was laid. It is sad, too, that to these scoffers are entrusted the keys of the church. To no one sect of Christians worshipping under the roof can the keys be given, so bitter is their hatred of each other.

Feuds have been engendered among the different religious sects for possession of the various relics within these walls. Above the shrines burn the lamps of Greeks, Copts, and Latins, and peace perforce rests here.

In the center of the rotunda is the Holy Sepulchre. Here the holy fire issues on Easter Eve. Oriental Christians remove their shoes before entering. But we were not expected to do so. We entered a small chapel and descended into a cavern, where are places in the hewn rock. There is one lined with marble, said to be the actual sepulchre. A piece of the cross and the stone the angel rolled away was found here. Much must be taken with the faith that questions not. So we go from one sacred spot to another, on and on until one is too tired to think or dispute.

This church is supposed to cover the ground where Joseph of Arimathea's Gardens were. The fable of the exact center of the earth where Adam was created is told to me, and the spot is marked by a ball, my dragoman insisting it is Adam's skull! Not mine the right to question—only to look and wonder. I saw the footprints of Christ, the stocks where his feet were placed, the prison where he was bound, where he was scourged, and the place where Mary received the body of her Son.

A network of suppositions, of traditions, hangs about the place. Adam was buried here, and the blood of Christ flowing through a cleft rock touched and restored him to life. Of the resurrected Adam tradition tells us not. The place where stood the three crosses, the rod of Moses, and the innumerable things are wearying.

I go out into the streets, filled with a moving, pulsing life that is not mythical, but following along the line that reaches back into the dim ages, it is very little changed. Through the narrow, stony, stair-like streets I see the donkeys climbing as I have seen them in pictures, even as they climbed through the similar streets when the Infant went with His mother away from the land of Herod.

And then I go out through the imposing Damascus Gate, with its towers and gray battlements, where are throngs of people. Bedouin tents, and kneeling camels rest there or take their burdens over the roads with noiseless steps, but growling and complaining often with a wondering look in the soft, liquid eyes,—a look, too, that seems longing to be free from the wearying crowds and the heavy loads. A lifting of the muzzle, a start as if the deserts, the palms and quiet beyond the hurry, and rough grind of the world, might be reached; and then they are driven on and the camel's dream is over. The poor beasts kneel before their often brutal keepers, more ill used than any beast, save the donkey, in the world, I think.

Beyond the gate is the valley of Kidron, where the Moslems bury their dead on one side, and the Jewish cemetery is on the other. On the road leading past the Golden Gate is Absalom's Tomb, which is piled about with stones.

No Jew passes the spot without throwing a stone. They remember Absalom's disobedience. Back of this is the Tomb of Jehoshaphat, the pool of Siloam, the Valley of Hinnom, where children were sacrificed to Moloch, and there is the Grotto where Jeremiah wrote his Lamentations.

Above this place is a lonely hill called Gordons Calvary, the place where He suffered, was buried, and rose again, must ever be of supreme interest to all believers. It seems to me

DAMASCUS GATE, PORTE DE DAMASCUS.

the only possible place for the tragedy enacted here. The church built over the supposed place in the heart of the crowded city, a city larger then than now, could not have been outside the walls at that time.

On this lonely Calvary, one might well imagine the throngs who watched the crucifixion. Through the gates came those who loved Him, following the form bearing the cross along the Via Dolorosa, to Golgotha. One has visions of the brilliant concourse of high officials and high priests, of Agrippa almost persuaded, of the rabble and the patient face of Him

who was crucified, and the poor and needy whom this stranger looked after.

It seems to me there has not been much change in their condition since the crucifixion. The poor are in the city's streets, persistent and insistent as of old, which are filled with a life that is not mythical, but follows in the line of tradition.

Along the streets or outside of the walls, places are shown me that somehow seem strangely familiar. So I feel as I sit on the slopes of the Mount of Olives and below me see the road, up which creep the lepers to sit by the highway and cry with piteous pleadings for help. The solitude is perfect on Olivet, golden shadows waver over the Judean Hills. Far in the distance I see the misty outlines of the Moab Mountains, and like a great gleaming gem the Dead Sea flashes and burns in the clear light. The valley of the Jordan is of emerald hue, and a tiny thread glints now and then, showing the old river hastening to lose itself in that sea wherein no thing of life is known.

The faint twitter of birds comes from the olive trees, and far above in the blue ether are vultures sailing or poising on wings that seem never to move or quiver. No breath of wind touches the sleeping palms and the noise of the city is not here. The magical effect of silence, of nature, is enthralling. The people, the churches, and the bazaars are all wearying. Sacred as is the dear old city, her walls and rough, stony streets and the suppositious places are not solacing. Here on the hill things seem as though they might be but little changed; these trees, hoary and old, stood, perhaps, and saw the scene on Calvary over and beyond. They witnessed the Transfiguration, perhaps. Farther away is Nazareth, and there is the white, gleaming road over which I traveled to Bethany and Jericho.

I remember the beautiful day when I drove with an especial escort provided by the Government—a sheik with grave, immovable face, which seemed unchangeable until I praised his beautiful Arab horse, then a tenderness stole in his eyes that were until then fierce and gleaming.

Jordan, the Dead Sea! The Wilderness! Mount of Temptation! The exhausting journey over the alkaline

plains leading to the Dead Sea I well remember. Tents, from which peered swarthy, Bedouin faces, and from which little brown children, with no more clothing than the angels wear, ran to meet us.

Pilgrims from the far steppes of Russia toiled along the road to rest on the longed-for Jordan. Weary, yet hopeful, they had walked from Jaffa and Jerusalem. The faith that was as a grain of mustard seed, the faith of those who were guided by the Star of Bethlehem, was with these people. Christ certainly was as real as possible to these Pilgrims as to those of old. They go to the Jordan, and in Jerusalem they kneel on Calvary, kiss the dust His feet once trod, and grieve by Golgotha, even as the Jews who meet and wail beside that vast, torn, gray old wall, where their tears seem to give life and moisture to the frail mosses and tender green vines growing out of the rifts.

All these memories come to me and I am loath to leave the hill and go back to the crowds and the dusty city, where water is so precious that when the streets are sprinkled it is done by pouring a tiny stream from pigskins carried about by men. Once more I look toward Jericho and see the wondrous flush of rose and apricot on the hills. And then I go down among the masses.

Armenians, Greeks, Syrians, the whole world of men clad in strange costumes; the veiled women, and the beggars, persistent as gadflies, and the strange mixture of races greet me. There are quaint scenes and a strange gravity of the masses, for one hears but little of song or laughter. There are no places of amusement, no newspapers. It is unlike any other city. There are no street cars with ringing bells, yet therein lies the charm.

One would scarcely wish to see the things here one meets in modern cities. The Ecce-Homo Arch, the Tomb of David, the Room on Zion, where was eaten the Last Supper, the place where Judas lived and made it a crime, seemingly, for men to greet each other with a kiss; where Peter lived and proved how inconstant a man can be.

Every nook and corner, every street and wall, is associated with the past that is sacred, that will endure. For the Holy

City is connected with the past, the most sacred in the history of the world.

One of the most quiet, as well as the most beautiful, of all places in Jerusalem, is the magnificent Mosque of Omar. Cairo, Constantinople, Moscow, have nothing that exceeds

ECCE HOMO ARCH, JERUSALEM.

this in beauty, in magnitude or decorations. The immense dome, the arches and pillars are unequaled. A special guard escorted us into the place where the faithful pray, facing Mecca. This covers the sight of Solomon's Temple. Here is the sacrificial stone where Abraham's faith was tested and Isaac escaped.

When Mohammed went to heaven, this stone, which would cover half a block, rose to follow him. The angel Gabriel pushed it back to earth. David, Solomon, Abraham, and others prayed in niches underneath this stone. An imprint of Mohammed's head is shown, proving him to be taller than the others, the stone kindly receding in one place for him. It cost quite a sum of money to go through this Moslem wonder, but it is worth it. Aside from the legends, the chaste beauty of the carvings in wood, the effect of coloring, is marvelous in richness, the light falling from the exquisite windows high up in the dome, down upon the wonderfully beautiful and priceless rugs covering the floors. Legends and traditions in bewildering confusion greet me at every turn. Mohammed declared one prayer better here than a thousand elsewhere.

He prayed beside the rock and from hence he went heavenward on his steed El-Burak. The Mosque El Aksa, where he received his revelation, the walls, columns, porches, beggar description.

I leave the place where is the rock whereon was written "Shem," the great and unspeakable name of God, and wander through the streets, where are the money changers, and the bazaars, where the owners wait in placid content the pleasure of the buyers. We ride on donkeys through and around the city, that is never without interest.

On a certain day I drove through the Jaffa Gate, where are always seen the throngs of people passing in and out of the walled city, over the road where went the three Wise Men; the road which is always lined with people, with donkeys and camels heavily burdened. Flocks of sheep and goats walk peacefully along the way. There are terraces and a perfect network of stone fences lacing and interlacing the hill slopes where grow the vines and fruit trees. Peach and apricot trees grow here, and the almond, in all the glory of white and pink bloom, shower the blossoms upon the ground as we pass. All the tender herbage of spring gladdens the eyes and hearts of these people, who know what winter means, for it is colder than with us on the Pacific's rim, Jerusalem and Bethlehem being over two thousand feet above the sea level. On the road we passed by Rachael's Tomb, the well of the Magi, and

a lone tree is shown me where Judas hanged himself. Then we are in Bethlehem. The old town is interesting. One thinks of the beautiful, idyllic story of Ruth, and my heart goes out to the Ruth we know.

I will pause here a moment, Aileen, to say that I feel wicked when I think of the Ruth we know. I used to be so angry when mama held her up to me as an example for me to follow. I thought once she cared more for praise and for effect than to be her natural self. I think I misjudged her, and cry "mea culpa." I think of her sorrows, and hope to make amends some time.

THE WELL AND ROAD WHERE WENT THE THREE WISE MEN.

I look on the places where shepherds watched their flocks by night, and the story is retold again. And in some caves under the sloping hills I saw the same scenes re-enacted in the gathering of the flocks at eventide, the shepherds with sandals laced with leathern thongs, clothed in garments of sheepskin, guard their flocks by day and night as has been done since Christ said, "Feed my sheep." How easy it is to understand certain things in the Bible when one visits the Holy Land. The herbage now, almost at its best, is scanty and sparse, and the food for the herds is a thing of care and anxiety at all times.

In a crypt of the church I saw the manger where the Infant foretold was born. The story of the manger, the stable, the babe, the star, the men who followed it—who has not cherished mental pictures of them from early childhood?

It was disappointing to me to find the manger of today lined with white marble, with a toy doll and rich brocades for hangings.

Out of the churches and away from the cities, in the country, one can imagine there has been but little change. I saw David's well and his cisterns, which have lasted probably all these thousands of years. They mean much here, as in Jerusalem, where there are no aqueducts or water, except the

COLONNADE OF THE MOSQUE OF OMAR, JERUSALEM, PALESTINE.

rain that falls upon the roofs and is collected in the cisterns. Water has ever been the crying need of Jerusalem.

Back again in the Holy City, and from the battlements I look on Bethany, Olivet, Gethsemane and its old gnarled olive trees, and other historical places. I see the mountains rimming the Jerusalem of today. The sun sinks behind the hills, and the notes of the Angelus come soft and tremulous from the sweet sounding bells, mingled with the muezzin's cry, calling the faithful to prayer, "No God but God." They call through the calm of early dawns, and subdued stillness of dim evenings. Whether from Christian church or Moslem

tower, the cry is ever the same, as are the desires of the heart. And mankind here as elsewhere goes on through life, hoping, trusting alike, for peace and happiness beyond the grave.

* * * * * * * * *

I am not given to postscripts, Aileen, but you must have one with this letter. I cannot wait a moment to tell you that Ruth Wilder and Fred Marshall are here in Jerusalem, and that I came face to face with them in the lobby of the hotel this evening. I literally fell upon Ruth's neck, and in imagination treated Fred to a similar embrace. Next to you and mama, I could not have asked a greater joy. They have just arrived with a party of friends, and tell me that I am to join them. They will not hear of anything else, and it can be easily arranged.

I positively feel rejuvenated, even in this city, where it is proper to be steady when one starts to grow. I really did a deux temps in the hotel lobby, I was so happy. Ruth is looking fully as well as I expected to see her, from your reports. Fred is—well, he was always a handsome man, you know, better looking I think than Frank, who, by the way, returned very hurriedly to California without telling Fred just why he deserted him. Not another word. YOUR EDITH.

XXXIX

"Prince, be you wise in your golden prime;
Live you and love while pulses flame,
Till careless you pass—sans prose, sans rhyme—
Back to the night from whence you came."

I am dipping my pen in dreams, and am wandering in dreamland, Edith, a land from which I pray God I may never awaken. I revel in the sweetness and the delirium of my dream life. Death is what I fear now, for then there will be no fancies, no dear possible or impossible things—but just forgetfulness of all, of every one I know, of those I can call my own, my very own. But then I have faith that all will be made right and that God will not let us be lost from our loved ones through all eternity.

But life is so sweet to me now that I do not want to dream or think of anything except life and its treasures. I have come out unscathed, I trust, from my recent nightmare of which I wrote you. Perhaps it is worth while, after all, to be faithful to our friends for friendship's sake, which sometimes costs more than anything else in the world.

I had time to think it over for several days after I wrote you and I dreaded more than I can tell you the effect of what that Mephistopheles might do. I have, as you know, been rather proud of my name and position, and while I knew that I had done no wrong, one cannot always tell where a falsehood, well sown and watered by cups of tea and other liquids may spread its noxious roots. And more than ever I feared the spread of the canker when Frank Lindsay sent up his card. I knew he and Bert Wilder belonged to the same club, but I did not know that Frank had returned from Mexico. He had written rather often and I thought he intended going to Egypt, at least his letters intimated as much.

I was glad to see him, and longed to tell him all my troubles. You know we have known each other since we

were very little tots, and I have gone to him with many a little sorrow in tenderer years. Well, dear, after we had chatted a while, he spoke of Ruth and told me how they had traveled together for a time and spoke of her sorrow and grief; and said something also about our friendship.

"I always thought you were one of Ruth's best friends, Aileen," he said, in a rather peculiar tone.

"And what weighty argument has caused you to say you thought so—why not say you think or you know I am her friend?"

"One can't always be certain—we may think things, until proofs come to drive fixed beliefs to the winds."

It flashed across my mind in an instant that Bert Wilder had put his threat into execution, and the thought of my lifelong friend whom I trusted even as I do your honest heart, Edith, seared my soul.

"What do you mean?" I asked, while I felt the blood leave my face despite every effort.

"I have heard that Wilder visited you at your country home; that he was with you on a trip to the Grand Cañon."

"Well, and what else?" I asked. My heart seemed ready to burst.

"Is it not so?" and he smiled. It stung me to the quick.

"Yes, it is true," I replied.

"Then you confess, Aileen, you, the pure, honest girl I have known, since you were a dear loving little sweetheart of mine, that you have been following in the footsteps of the many—in the common rut, I might say," he said slowly. "You encouraging a married man—the husband of your best friend, one who trusts you, and believes in you as in herself. What am I to believe?"

"I thought I should die, Edith, to have Frank doubt me. It was too much to endure. I had never thought it possible that he could come to me like this, even had Wilder carried out his threats. I cared more for Frank's good opinion in the moment I knew it! It burst upon me like a flash of lightning—than the whole world besides. And with the knowledge came the grief and anger that he should doubt.

"Believe what your friend and close companion—Bert Wilder—says. All and more! You haven't been told the half of it!" Righteous indignation flamed in my face, for I felt it was burning. Again he smiled.

"So you confess?"

"All and more when you have donned your robes of priesthood!" I flashed back at him.

"I cannot wait," he added. "I want to hear from you and you only, and now. I have had such unbounded faith in you, your noble womanhood, your pure life, for I have watched you closer than you know, perhaps. I have placed my faith in womankind in your keeping."

"Well, you can find cold storage elsewhere. I am not going to be a receptacle or an example any longer. Find someone else who is worth the effort; even though we have been friends, I want to tell you that you are like the rest of your sex. It is the Adam in you ever ready to blame the woman."

I paused, my whole frame trembling, though I kept my fingers clutched upon the arms of the chair that it might not be observed.

"Was he not here two or three days ago? Did you not receive him here alone, and for a long time? How long—do you remember?"

"Yes, he was here, and I sent for him! And the time—well, what does it matter to you?"

"A great deal, especially when the door was ajar, and anyone who happened in the outer room could see and hear."

"You did not—you would not dare to—"

"To listen? Well, I did, and am rather glad that I happened here at the particular moment I did, though I thought it best not to declare my presence at that time."

The thought that he had heard and knew the truth was the traditional feather, at least the truth moulted one at that moment which brushed away something like a film from my eyes and I seemed to see Frank's eyes smiling into mine with a mischievous light; and another light also new to me.

"Aileen, let us end this farce. Don't you know, sweetheart, I have always loved you, though I have been afraid you did not care. But looking into your troubled, angry eyes, some-

thing tells me you do care a little and I think you need me now, don't you? Come—"

He opened his arms and I knew I needed his care—his love, and that I had waited for it as the one needful thing all my life, and that heaven had indeed been kinder than I deserved.

I know now that love, the flower and fruit of the best and highest in life, is mine. It is but the fulfilling of the law, even as of old. It will transform not only myself, but the whole world for me. Of it I feel I am truly born again, and I know too well that all of my life worth living is and will be fostered, nourished and kept pure and true by my great love for Frank.

Our little secrets are too sacred to speak of Edith, but we are to be married at once and go to El Nido. No waiting for a needless trousseau, Frank says, and his vacation is not yet ended. He has confessed that he came home because Ruth confided in him that she asked me to help her. And he, knowing Wilder so well, realized the danger I was in and hastened home.

He has told me since that he saw Bert at the club and invited a number of friends to dine with him. After the dinner was over and the waiters withdrew, he locked the door and then told the whole story to them. Bert, the coward that he is, tried to bluster, and once mentioned my name. Frank said:

"If you mention the name of my future wife, if I can gain her consent, I will shoot you—cowardly cur that you are."

Then he told the gentlemen present how he had come to call upon me and was ushered into the reception room and hearing Wilder mention his wife's name, he paused a moment, uncertain whether to withdraw or intrude. Then he heard Wilder say that "his wife did not care."

"'I concluded to wait, as I had left the heart-broken woman so recently,' I said to them, Aileen."

Then he told them the story of Wilder's wife, the birth and death of their little babe, of Bert's neglect and indifference, how he seduced a young girl; and then to cap his infamy

took her to his home in Monterey. Then with a made up story about a cousin gained the sympathy of his wife. Frank told them of Wilder's brutal conduct to her and his desertion also, and his heartless conduct toward the girl later on. And told them also how I had taken the child for Ruth's sake, trying to keep the separation a secret, and hoping that Wilder would return to his wife in time; and imperiling my reputation for Wilder's wife, who was my friend, whom we had both known and loved since we were children; also of his dastardly offer to me.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I have loved Miss Livingston since we played together as children. I have heretofore hesitated about declaring my love, because she was very much wealthier than I, so a foolish pride, perhaps, held me back. Now my fortune is equal to hers, I think, but if it were not so, I would not wait longer.

"I was never so proud and happy in my life as when I stood a day or two ago unnoticed and saw her, the woman I love, in her outraged womanhood take this cur by the collar, force him into a seat, and tell him that the regret of her life was, that she was not a man and could choke the life out of him. You can imagine how I felt, how hard it was to restrain myself, but a thought of his lying tongue made me hesitate for her sake. I followed him out of the house, neither he nor Miss Livingston the wiser for the knowledge I had gained. Now, gentlemen, do you wish to know this man any longer as a friend and club member?"

"No, a thousand times no!" they yelled. And a lawyer present stood up and said:

"Not only will we strike him off the list of our friends, but I will say to you, friend Frank, and for your championship of the deserted wife, that he is amenable to the law for seduction, and I will see that he gets the full benefit unless he leaves the State at once. He can have two days in which to say good-bye to any chance acquaintance he may meet."

"You ought to have heard the yells, Aileen," he said, "as I unlocked the door and opened it. He went out, his head bowed with shame, his frame trembling like a man stricken

with palsy. I think he will trouble you no more, my brave, impetuous girl."

Then he told me that Alice Heaton's adopted parents were close friends of Jack Gordon, and he found out that Bert Wilder had seduced the girl and taken her away before she was eighteen. She had written to the Brownings that she was married and her name was Alice Bertram. A short time before Browning died, it was ascertained they were living in a secluded cottage on the heights back of Oakland and Mrs. Browning had sent a package to Wilder before she died, but whether the girl received it, Jack did not know. After Wilder's return to the city, and his wife disappeared, Jack could not ascertain if Bert ever saw the girl though he had put detectives on Wilder's track. Mr. Browning had asked Jack to try to find the girl, who was not legally adopted, though she thought she was, and that her name was Alice Heaton.

I thought again of the girl with the depths of sorrow in her eyes, but could not talk about her just then to Frank. I thought of my lucky escape and I said to Frank: "What would I have done had you not happened to overhear us? My poor word would have availed but little against his falsehoods. I did not think or realize the evil construction that might be placed upon our seeming intimacy. The world at large does not know of the separation, and as his wife's friend I thought it was not a serious thing to be with him in company of others. His letters containing the protestations of his love I have kept, and also have sent copies to Edith, and I want you to read them sometime. I think they will exonerate me from any reciprocal feelings."

"Your word is enough for me, Aileen. I trust you utterly. There will be no secrets between us, dear. We know each other too well."

Edith, dear, Wilder has disappeared. Just where, no one knows. But one who knew him saw him purchase a ticket and found that he had taken passage to New York. I pray heaven we may never see or hear of him again. And should you see Ruth before I can reach her by letter, say only this, that he has disappeared, we know not where. I would not

wound her further by telling her of his conduct or that he was forced to leave.

I can see in the not very distant future the smoke—incense, I should say—arising from the narghileh. I must get another one for dear old friend Jack Gordon, who has given me Frank's letters, which I will read while they talk, or busy myself with other things, for I shall concern myself more about household affairs in the future. In times of peace prepare for smoke!

AILEEN.

XL

"When grief is great enough, it cuts down until it finds the very soul, and this is agony. And he who has it does not seek to share it with another, for he knows that no other human being can comprehend it. It belongs to him alone and he is dumb."

Alice and her journal.—To you I have told my thoughts. You have known of my hours of happiness and sorrows. To you only can I tell of the misery that fate has heaped upon me. Dear, silent pages, I must write more of my life. Something impels me. Your pages are blotted with the blistering tears that fall, staining the pure white leaves even as my life was stained by one who drew my soul from its haven of purity, by a pretense of love. I wonder what he will have to answer for who breathed vows of constancy and truth and I believed.

In the beginning I was innocent after I knew it was too late. In my helpless condition I knew not what to do, though I had planed to go away and try to do what I thought was best for me. But the old, old story was re-enacted—he came and I was tempted to remain. His reasoning seemed right and plausible. He said his wife did not care for him and that she would be glad of an excuse for a separation. And if I went to their home it would be all right. I thought in my foolish heart if she did not care for him that it did not matter, and I loved him so much I was willing to brave everything for the sake of his love. And the childish desire to be revenged for her taunting words to me when I was a child and which had never faded from my mind, seemed to make it right to do what he told me was the only possible way for us to be happy, and for him to be able to claim me before the world.

I went and the agony I endured I cannot write of, though buoyed up by his constant reiterations of his love and the hope held out that very soon he would tell his wife the truth and she would gladly give him the divorce he only waited for.

And then one evening Ruth returned and overheard our conversation. She saw him kissing me and fell senseless into the room. For the first time a suspicion that she still cared for her husband crossed my mind. Though when I said as much to him he answered "No"; that she was subject to fainting spells and for me not to cry or worry. He would see that all would be well.

The next day she disappeared, and Bert, as I now called him, said he had learned that she had gone to San Francisco, that he was sure she had gone to see about a divorce and he would not recognize her any longer as his wife.

I begged to go away. I wanted to leave, for it seemed to me that there was something back of all his excuses. Somehow I felt that she still loved him, though he had solemnly assured me that she did not care for him, and that her pride only had kept her from a separation. He made me promise to remain until he should return, saying that he would have all arranged for our future happiness when he came back.

It was several days before he returned, and then Ruth came with him. I saw him only for a moment. He said she was not well, but insisted on coming back with him; and he would tell me all the next day.

When I went in the breakfast room the following morning he told me to take her seat, that she was not to sit there any more, and I could pour his coffee. She came in. I said something to her about her health and the climate not agreeing with her. She made no reply, but spoke to Bert and said:

"Was it for this you brought me back to doubly insult me?"

I stared at him in astonishment. He told her not to make a scene, and that I was to keep the seat in the future. I was frightened at her look and his stern manner as she went out. And I started to go, too.

"Sit down, Alice," he said to me, in a voice unlike I had ever heard before, and trembling I obeyed.

"I want to say," he went on in a low voice, "that I followed Ruth to our home in the city; that I have told her the whole truth, and she forgave me. And the result is that she cannot make our secret public for she cannot sue me for a divorce."

"I do not understand. I thought that was what you wished, what you went back for. You said it was for our happiness; that she did not care and would be glad of a separation."

"I know but in this I have deceived you. She does care. In fact she loves me so much she forgave all. That was why she came back with me. I do not love her. I have told you the truth in this respect. I will not live with her. You and I will go back to the city today. You must pack up at once, and go on the first train. I will see you off in safety.

"You will go to the city and go at once to Mrs. Andrews and the cottage. I will follow you later and we will be happy yet. Ruth will live here and the child will be well cared for, and the world none the wiser. And we two happy in our little home as we were before—" he paused— "before this unpleasant episode forced us to change our little Eden for a time."

I was so stunned by the revelation that I was numb and helpless.

"Then all this has been a subterfuge, my coming here—the falsehoods told to Ruth and me. You do not intend getting a divorce; do not mean to marry me," I cried.

"Not at present, dear. Do not be exacting. It may come in time, but could not be done now. In the meantime, we can be happy together. Alice, my love, why do you care? You said you cared for nothing—creed or law, and I believed you. We can be happy and the dear world none the wiser."

"I know, but that was when I thought your wife did not love you. I have changed and things I cheated myself into believing right, do not look the same to me since"—I could say no more. I felt myself growing faint and weak.

He saw it and said:

"Now, brace up. Cheat yourself again into the same old bright sweetheart I knew over on the hills. Run away and get ready. I will send the maid to help you. But you must go away; Ruth may not be as she has been."

He opened the door, called the maid, and told her she was to help me get ready for the first train; that I was compelled to go away on important business. Then he handed me a package, saying:

"This was sent you in my care. I forgot to give it to you last night—read it on the train, you will barely have time to get ready."

Bewildered by the sudden change in Bert's manner and the thought that Ruth loved him even as I did, was almost more than I could endure; but I forced myself to appear calm and worked hurriedly with the maid until all was finished, and then I started for the nursery. Bert intercepted me.

"No, you cannot go in. You will break down. The nurse must not suspect anything is wrong. Be brave for your sake and mine. You must, I tell you," as I still hesitated. "You do not know or understand as well as I do."

"No, I do not. Would to God I had understood, then I would never have come here," I cried, white and trembling.

"But you did, and it is to save you from the world's scorn and myself that I am trying to do what is best for both of us. Won't you believe it? Won't you trust me? Hard as it is for you, you must do as I tell you, for the sake of our dear love. Alice, do not desert me or forsake me now. If you do not follow out the plans as I have arranged, you will drive me to insanity. Come with me at once."

And I was compelled to go without further words.

Once on the train my mind seemed to gather its reasoning powers. I knew almost at once that I was not going to the cottage. Slowly it dawned upon me that I would not see him again. I had done wrong in coming here—his wife loved him. Ah, I knew it now—knew it when I saw her face this morning, and if she loved him and was willing to forgive all, I had no right in the cottage and less right ever to see him again. My soul seemed to shrivel up at the thought. It had expanded in the warm sensuous atmosphere of a love that was to blight and sear it. I was not learned in the ways of the world; I knew nothing about the eternal and immutable laws of justice, of compensation that was to come. But slowly it was unfolded before my mental vision. I was young and life was not an easy thing to dispose of. One could not die easily unless one could have the courage to brave death and end it instantly. So my thoughts ran on.

Opening my traveling bag, I saw the package he had given me addressed "Miss Alice Heaton, care of Mr. Bert Wilder." I was astonished to see the name. From whom could it be? I had been called Mrs. Bertram so long, I had forgotten that anyone knew my real name. Turning it over I saw Bert's writing on a note.

"I do not know, Alice," he wrote, "what this letter contains, but am very sure it is from Mrs. Browning. She sent me a note saying she knew where you were. How I wonder? But you will tell me soon. I wish to say that you must forget all that is unpleasant and only remember that love shall hold all that is sweet, and make the bitter less hard if it must come to us in the years for you and me. There will be no tomorrows of loneliness for us so long as we two live and love in a oneness of thought, of purpose, and good-fellowship.

"Free from the taint of selfishness and hallowed by the sanctity of a great and omnipresent love, life shall be henceforth an existence unbroken by the worries of the world—the envious world that shall never intrude into our harmonious life. I have realized that it is best for us to live as we have been living. Neither you nor I care for creed or law. We will be sufficient unto ourselves.

"But we will live as we have heretofore, keeping our own secrets. Ruth will never make it public, and we, secure, will live on until that last deep sleep shall come. Until then, we will take all of the best this life can give us and trustfully go on until the end beyond which we know nothing. Trust me, and love me until we meet, and all will be well."

Slowly the truth forced its way into my heart. He did not intend to marry me! Never had, I began to think. Yet I loved him so well I could not believe it. Surely he could not have been acting a lie, and making me believe it all the while! But I could not do it. I would not go back, nor ever see him again, though I loved him with my whole soul, though it should kill me, yet I must not do further wrong. God help me! I cried—I have done enough—help and give me strength! Forcing myself to be calm, for I thought I was attracting attention, I did not open the other letter. I felt I could endure no more.

I closed my eyes, trying to think, and heard some people talking behind me. One mentioned a hotel. They were evidently some theatrical people from their conversation, and mentioned a hotel I had not heard of or knew. Instantly I realized that I must go somewhere, and I turned and asked them about the place, saying I was a stranger and knew nothing about the best hotels in the city. One of the men answered civilly that the hotel spoken of was good, but a quiet place frequented by theatrical people.

"Do you belong to the profession?" an elderly man asked.

"No, but I have always thought I should like to. It must be a little better than anything else—the change, the excitement and keeping constantly occupied, one has to be busy, I suppose?"

"Rather," he answered. "You do not know much about the life, I think?"

"I have read something about theatrical people. I have never been in a theatre, so I do not know."

I saw him glance at his companion.

"And in what saintly enclosure have you lived your—not so very many years, I judge?" and he hesitated.

"I have not been out of the convent very long," I replied.

"And you have aspirations for the stage already. In what particular line do your fancies lead you?"

"I have been told that I could sing, but sometimes people are prejudiced—do not mind; I am foolish to speak of so silly a thing. Pardon me, I only meant to ask about the hotel."

I was ashamed to have spoken, but a wild thought had come into my mind. If only I could have something to do, if I could get away and forget! I had been told my voice was good, and Bert had praised me. And then I felt the tears sting my eyes. I closed my lids firmly to keep them back, while struggling to compose myself; I heard them talking about needing a singer.

"The appearance is right," one said, in a low tone. "If the voice is equal—nothing better could be asked."

After a pause, the older man said to me:

"If you think you would like the excitement and change of a theatrical life, I would like to hear your voice this evening at the hotel, if you are not too tired. You look as thought you are not very strong. Have you been ill?"

"Yes," I replied, "ill and worried because I have had troubles, but I will try and perhaps I can please you."

"We will take you to the hotel if you wish, as you are a stranger"—he paused as if uncertain.

"I shall be very grateful." The thought flashed across my mind that if I went with them, it would appear as if I belonged to them if inquiry should be made. My desire now was to lose my identity that I might not be traced for the present at least.

The ordeal, dear journal, is over, and though I was frightened when the time came for me to sing, it was only to be a preliminary test, the manager, as he proved to be, said. He sent for me at the appointed hour, and I was taken to his apartments, where I found him and the other man who had spoken to me on the train. They asked me to sing without further comment. I tried. At first, it was a poor effort, but I was encouraged to go on, until I forgot myself and my fears, and sang as I had not done for months and since I was happy in the cottage, a loved and happy wife, as I thought.

Now, what was I? An outcast; fate's plaything. The thought sent a tremor in my voice that caused me to end in a wail, it seemed to me. I started up, feeling that I had ruined my hope. I looked at the manager—he seemed astonished. He knows how silly I have been—how useless to think I could sing, was my thought.

"Where did you learn to sing? Who taught you?" he asked.

I named the convent and my teacher.

"I do not know, but I am sure your teacher has had experiences not learned inside cloistered walls. Your voice has been trained as if for the express purpose you now say you desire. If you care, you may consider yourself engaged. We will test your voice in the theatre tomorrow, and settle business matters. You had better rest tonight. You seem to be

trembling," and he smiled kindly. "Tell me your name?"

I did so. "But I do not want my name known," I said hurriedly.

"What dreadful thing has the little one done that she is so desirous of suppressing it?"

I was alarmed and replied that my people would not permit me to go on the stage if they knew. "But it is my desire," I said, "and there is no reason only that."

"Then we will find a name to suit the singer. Have you registered under your own name here?"

"They did not ask me. I did not know if I must."

"Never mind, they waited for me, I suppose, because I told them to show you a room. I will arrange it. Good night, be satisfied with your gift, my child, and make the best of it."

He was unlike anyone I had met before. I felt as though I could trust him with my life, my secret, and I seemed to know that he would be worthy of the trust.

It was not until the next morning that I remembered the unread letter. I was so worn out with my experiences, my fears, and hopes of a new and unexpected life. I opened it and read: "Alice, I have known for a long time that you are not married, though you wrote me a falsehood! Jane found it out. She has a friend living near the cottage where you and your 'husband' as you called him, Mr. Bertram, or Mr. Bert Wilder, as we knew him, lived. Jane had seen you with him several times before you ran away. And while we suspected and feared that it might be so, I did not dream you could be so shameless as to live so near us and a large city with another woman's husband.

"Neither could I have been made to believe by anything but convincing evidence that Mr. Wilder, our professed friend, could have come to our own home and seduced our grandchild! At last you have the truth—under our own roof, or at least within the confines of our home."

"Grandchild!"—the paper fell from my hand; I sank down, helpless and faint.

Oh, what was the mystery? Now I remembered Mrs. Browning would not allow me to say anything about my

parents and they claimed to have adopted me! Struggling to master my emotions, I picked up the letter and read on:

"Jane knew of the letter you wrote and that you signed it Alice Bertram. She learned also that Mr. and Mrs. Bertram lived near her friend. And one evening she saw Mr. Wilder get off the cars and start toward the cottage. She was curious and followed, and saw him enter the hedge and through it saw you both, with you in his arms. The rest was easy to ascertain. My husband was ill—I will not call him your grandfather—will not allow him to be twice dishonored! Time passed. I commanded Jane to keep quiet, and she did so. My husband died without having the burden of your shame added to the woe he had endured for years. The grief that had shortened his life, and that will mine, I know—your mother's disgrace."

My mother's disgrace! Oh, the horror of the words. My beautiful mother, whose memory I loved and whom I worshipped! What had she done? A sickening, deathlike feeling gripped my heart. Everything seemed black—I was suffocating—something seemed to snap within my heart, and I knew no more. * * * I do not know how long I remained unconscious, but at last I awakened with a horrible dread. Something terrible had happened! Then I saw the letter, and remembered. I must read on to the end. I must know the rest.

I read: "Now that I know all and my husband dead, the property which was all left to me, with instructions to dispose of as I chose, I will say, I have made my will and have left nothing to you save a small allowance which I have added to the amount you have in the bank. I shall bestow the bulk of it in charities. Some I shall give to a maternity hospital—it will meet your approval, I am sure—being in the line of your aspirations.

"Of what we hoped for you, I will say nothing but this. My desire to send you away at the time was because I thought it better, and later because Jane knew of your clandestine meetings with Wilder, and knew he was married, though she did not know what I now tell you—that he is the husband of your half sister! Ruth Carrington's father betrayed your

mother when Ruth was scarcely more than a baby. He gained her affections and by some subterfuge led her to believe they were married. When she learned the truth, she went south and lived under an assumed name. We found out her shame when we returned from a trip abroad. And her father disowned her.

"We did not know until after her death that she had thought herself a wife. She was named Alice Heaton Browning, and assumed a portion of her name. In letters sent to us to be opened after she was dead she told us what we knew, that Carrington had been killed suddenly—this was when you were about five years old—and that his wife, Ruth's mother, went to Santa Barbara for her health. She lived near-by and you two children played together; but it was several weeks before your mother knew that the Ruth you spoke of was Ruth Carrington, and that her father was dead and her mother there for her health. The shock brought on a fainting spell from which she rallied.

"She wrote the full account of her life. We did not know where she was living until she wrote telling us that she could not live very long and begged us to look after you and adopt you if we could forgive her. But you were not to be known by any name but the name she had lived under—Alice Heaton. She did not want to further disgrace us, and asked that you might be brought up in a convent.

"You were put in school as she desired. We did not adopt you, but thought if you proved worthy we would leave the portion which should have been your mother's to you.

"How you have blighted our hopes—I leave it for you to judge. You were so like your mother that it wrung our hearts to have you with us. Still we hoped that all would be well and though we longed to tell you the truth, dared not. We did not want you to know of the sorrow your mother had given us, or the shame you inherited. But now I feel you deserve to know all. I have left a letter which will publish your shame and your mother's to the whole world, should you try to break the will.

"I hardly think you will care for the world to know who and what your mother was and that you have been living

with the husband of your half sister, whose father betrayed your mother. However, it is possible Mr. Wilder may want the money fully as much as he wanted you, whom he knew he could not marry.

"You chose your own way, and must lead your own life. But I pray you if you loved your mother, destroy this letter and let her rest in peace. I think you owe this much to her that you keep our name from the public. I shall not live long, and I pray God I may never see or hear anything more of you while I live. Mary Browning."

Dear Journal, my hand shakes as I write. I know what it is to receive the death sentence. I have had the first stroke and I know too well that I cannot endure life much longer. My mother! Oh! the thought of her. That is what touches my heart. There are little sharp pains. Something is stabbing, striking, hurting me! * * * And Ruth, whom I hated—ours the same father!

"Unclean and spotted from the world."

I writhe and moan in agony!

"The sins of the father shall be visited upon the children." How the thought scorches! Will my child be accursed also for the sin of its father and mother?"

"Not mine, surely not!" I cry, "for I did not know." Then I thought, why was I not told, and I started up in rage. Why did not those stony-hearted people tell me and warn me? Then I might have been spared. That prying, deceitful Jane! She knew all the time, and so did that hard-hearted old woman. Why did not they talk to me and tell me that Bert was a married man?

And all the while the old woman—she knew that the man was the husband of my half-sister. Yet because of her pride's sake would not tell me or give me a chance to know what I was doing.

Heaven knows I have done wrong, but not willingly. I was but a child, and surely have been more sinned against than sinning.

Almost crazed with grief, I went out and wandered for how long I know not. I finally found myself at the edge of the bay. The waters dimpled and sparkled. They looked

inviting. I will end it all now, I thought to myself. If death is but a forgetting of all things, why not end it? God has forgotten, else He would have sent me a word of warning before it was too late. There can be nothing beyond death worse than this life, I know.

I have not solved the simple question of life. Why think of the complexities of the hereafter?

"What do you mean to do?" asked a stern voice in my ear. The wind was blowing and I had not heard a step.

"Nothing that will interest you; but suppose I had thought of solving the unsolved mystery; and finding a relief in the nothingness of death, it is possible it may mean less or more." I knew he was there and that I would be obliged to go away for the time at least.

His face struck me as strangely familiar. All at once I remembered that I had seen him on the Muir Glacier. He thought, then, that I was attempting suicide when I was so happy! Well, there was reason enough now.

"Are you not afraid of death? Why soil your soul with sin?" he said earnestly. "You should strive for something better if life has not been what you desire—try to be sinless as when you came into the world. There must be wrong else you would not wish to end your life."

"Sinless!" The thought of my life flashed before my mental vision.

"Sinless, as I came into the world? Do you know that I was born in sin? That to me the inheritance of sin came with my first breath, weaving its meshes about me. Is it my fault that I was born into an evil world to suffer the pangs of hell because of the sins of others? I was betrayed and led into sin before I knew what it meant. Afterwards I yielded to a wrong because of my love. Now what is there left for me?"

"Turn away from it all and rely on Him, the great sufferer, and be sure you will find that rest which you have not sought up to the moment. Then you will be reconciled with suffering. You will be given better days, and you will feel at once the happiness for which you have been craving in vain. You will begin to see beyond the grave the beautiful horizon

shown by faith, and you will understand the problem of life. Go back," he said to me, "in your despair, ask humbly for help and relief."

I returned and found it was too late for my appointment at the theatre. Worn and weary, I threw myself upon the bed and slept.

It was night when I awoke; I tried to arise, but was too weak, and I realized that I had eaten nothing all day. I managed to reach the bell, and when it was answered asked for something to eat. Shortly afterwards my dinner was brought, and while trying to eat, a card was brought to me and the manager followed the boy in.

"I heard you were ill. Is that the reason you did not come to the theatre as you agreed? What is the trouble?"

"I have had some bad news; in fact brought the letter containing it with me but did not read it until this morning. I do not know what to do. I am too weak to sing now. I must rest a while if I care to live at all," I answered.

"I will tell you what to do. Some of my people are going to the mountains for a short time. Why not go with them? It will be a change, and the best thing for you. When you return in a few days, we will begin work, and you will feel like a new person very soon. Think it over and start tomorrow night."

I went with the people, and found them more than kind, but I could not recover my strength. I tried to be agreeable and hide my grief from them as much as possible. One day I wandered away where I could be alone. I was soothed by the mountains, the winds came as a blessing, and unconsciously I found myself singing out there to the great trees; alone in the woods, as I thought. Suddenly I saw a woman, beautiful and queenly looking, in the path above me. She came down and spoke to me about my voice, and she seemed so womanly, strong and sympathetic, with such a world of kindliness in her eyes I longed to go to her and throw myself into her arms and sob out my grief on her heart. I knew she loved the hills when she told me she had been out all day, and was sure she understood my longing also. She spoke about the path and being alone.

Suddenly my dream and my mother's form with extended arms came back to me. Was she beckoning and entreating me to come? I turned sick and dizzy, and fearing I would break down, I went hurriedly as I could down the trail to the hotel. She left the next day, and I learned her name was Aileen Livingston, and that her home was in San Francisco.

We returned, but I did not seem to grow stronger. There was something the matter with my heart. It pained me and I could scarcely sleep. All through the night I would prop myself up on the pillows; I seemed to be smothering. At times my heart would stop beating, and then the blood would surge up into my head, and my throat, and would choke me.

All the while I was fighting my battles alone, striving for victory over myself and my longings. I tried to hate the man who had crucified me, but I could not. At times I raged and fought against the desire to go back to him, to creep into his arms and rest; if only for a little while. I knew it would not be long! Why not end the struggle and drift with the tide that was carrying me swiftly on to the untried and unknown?

I was so lonely! And I was afraid in the long dark nights, when I lay staring and dreading the cold hand of death that took shape and form in the pale light that shone through the windows and beckoned me. The horrible shape that I could not hide from my eyes, though I closed them—it was ever before my mental vision.

I would lie for hours and wonder why I should suffer so, when there seemed to be so many happy people in the world. Sounds of music and laughter and happy snatches of song came from the streets and the halls of the hotel but for me there were only tears in my heart.

Then the old desires and thoughts, the longings would triumph for a time. Love watered by tears with him, was better than the scorching grief that would sting and hurt my eyes for all time, even as it did now.

While I wrestled with my misery, I could look ahead and feel that the uncertainty of life, even without marriage, was better than this dread and horror, for I felt that he did not intend to do as he had promised, but I would find life more

endurable, I would have at least the kindness and care of Mrs. Andrews. Now I had no one except a hurried visit now and then from some of my new acquaintances.

Several times I found myself trying to gather up my things to go, then the weakness and the thought of Ruth and of my mother held me back. I would try to overcome for their sake and thus I fought, inch by inch, growing weaker physically, but stronger each time in the endeavor to do what was right. In vain I strove to overcome my weakness. I tried to go to the theatre as I promised, but could not. I grew faint with the very effort to dress myself.

I knew it was impossible to sing, and I longed for someone, for a woman to come to me and pity me in my weakness. I thought there could be no one in all the world so lonely as I, so desolate and heartbroken. I would sob myself into a troubled sleep now and then, and once in my sleep I seemed to see the beautiful woman who had appeared like a vision to me on the mountain trail. There seemed to be infinite pity and love in her sweet eyes, as she bent over me and said something—I could not remember what, though I strove to hear. Oh! If only she might come and sit by me, for a little time, only an hour! Would she stay with me if she knew all? I wanted to tell her—I felt if she knew, she would not be cruel. One day I managed to dress and go out. Weak and trembling, I made my way to a church only a short distance away. I went in and sank down, trying to still the wild throbbings of my heart. The votive candles burned low, back in the gloom of a richly sculptured chapel. In the nave of the church the evening sun shone warm and bright through the incense misted air. A beam struck the crown surmounting the head of a picture of the Virgin Mary.

There was music from the choir loft. Someone was playing. There were tones harmonious, soft and sweet, and evanescent as the flood of light coming in through the richly decorated windows. Strange, vague and touching a suggestion of the supernal came to me with a sense of awe and fear. Yet there was a promise in the cadences and a blessing coming to me through the darkness—a thrilling recurring note heaven-sent,

surely, with its comforting message, at times full and clear, then receding into faint mysterious sounds, seemingly so far away that it was almost lost, then creeping slowly, softly toward me, ending in one triumphant burst of harmony, flooding my soul, my whole being with an almost unbearable ecstasy.

I arose feeling strong in the exaltation of the moment. Some people had come from the choir as the music died away. When I reached the outer door, everything grew dark and I steadied myself to keep from falling. Someone paused besides me and asked: "Are you ill?"

After a moment the dizziness passed and I saw the woman of the mountains—the woman of my dreams—with pity in her face standing beside me.

"I thought I was strong enough to come here, but I am weaker than I imagined."

"Where do you live?" she asked.

"Near here," I said, and mentioned the hotel.

"I will see you there in safety if you wish; can you walk?" She took me by the arm.

"Yes, if—" I panted for breath—"if you do not mind coming, I would love to have you—come with me."

"Certainly; it is no trouble; I will gladly assist you. You look very frail, but did I not see you in the mountains? I am sure of it now, when I see your eyes in the light."

I saw her face change, some wave of thought seemed to strike her, for I felt her hand tremble as she held my arm, but her eyes looked pityingly into mine. What was it? Did she know anything? Then I remembered I had registered my own name at the hotel in the mountains. I had not thought about it at the time.

As we went out she talked kindly of the mountains and their beauty, asking if I had been ill since my return and saying she would like to hear me sing again, and when we reached the hotel she said:

"I will see you to your room if I may," and went up in the elevator with me.

"Have you no one with you?" she asked. "You seem to need a nurse."

"I have no one in the world," I said, "not even a friend. I am all alone."

"If you would like, I will come again."

"Will you?" I said so eagerly that I was mortified. Then I added, "I dreamed once that you came, but this is not a dream, is it?" and I tried to laugh.

"No, it is a very real person with you, and I will come soon; but now I must go, and you need rest."

She went away leaving me cheered by the thought that I would see her again. I was no longer desolate, nor alone—a woman's pitying eyes had looked into mine. I could love her if I dared. I might in secret! She would come again. I was no longer—alone!

XLI

Love, the birds of the air sing it, the theme is love. All nature teaches it. And who shall deny it is the key-note of life. I would rather be miserable in my love than never to have known its sweetness.

Aileen, I have some news in return for yours. Ruth has confided in me that the girl Fred thought he loved came with them from Italy. She is married, but could not resist the opportunity of trying her fascinations again on Fred. He told Ruth that he had been the veriest fool in the world and was disgusted with himself to think he had ever imagined he could care for such a woman. She married Henry Hutton in New York before starting to Europe. She told Ruth that she had been his affianced wife for a long time; but she had amused herself with Fred, and that he had fallen desperately in love with her, and wondered if she could not have a little diversion now, that Henry would not mind, for she had told him all about it.

Ruth was so indignant at her heartlessness that she told it all to Fred, and now he is retaliating, whenever we chance to meet—they belong to another party—by being very devoted to me. I am seeing the same things over again and somehow they look different. One's friends make us see through their eyes now and then. And Fred is an artist to the core. I am delighted to find our ideas are similar. I shall enjoy traveling so much more now, though I thought it could scarcely be improved.

If Ruth is still grieving, she is brave and bears up well. She has said but little to me. I have not told her that you have written the whole of the pitiful tale to me. I shall keep her spirits up and help her all I can. I have time only for a short note. Fred is waiting for me. The dear fellow seems to wish me to go everywhere with him. Ruth does not care to go with us so constantly, for she is not very strong.

Fred said something to me yesterday that made my heart beat strangely.

"I think I have made a serious mistake in my life, Edith. I never knew you at home as I do now. If I had I should have followed you over here before now. But it is not too late for us to know each other better. May I follow or stay with you now, until we can return home together?"

"I can ask for no better friend or companion," I answered. Oh! Aileen. But he is calling—I must say good-bye.

EDITH.

RUTH TO AILEEN.

My friend, I will only send you a word of greeting with Edith's. She tells me she is sending a note. I am very glad to be here with her—she is so vivacious and full of life that she cheers and helps me more than I had thought possible; for somehow I used to think she did not care for me. Perhaps I was selfish, and thought too much of myself and of my own affairs. Now she is more than kind. She seems so happy in Fred's company, and they are congenial and suited to each other. I believe she has been in love with him all the time. Perhaps that is why she gave up society. You told me about it after I was married, if you remember. Fred and she were always good friends, she says. But he became infatuated with a girl who was unworthy of the love of so good a man as he is, and she saw but very little of him before she started to travel. He has found out the heartlessness of the woman he once loved, and is disgusted. I think Edith has caught his heart in the rebound. And I will be glad, for they ought to be very happy together.

I am hoping to hear something from you that will ease my heart, for I cannot forget—cannot help but love Bert, no matter what he has done. I walk along the Via Crucis. I have been on Calvary and in Gethsemane—Garden of Sorrows. The places remind me of the One who suffered. I feel that here where Christ was crucified my sorrow seems small. I am helped and feel that for the first time I can reconcile myself to my life. The Holy City, the Mount of Olives have given me a new faith. So I accept my fate and turn my thoughts more toward heaven, while trying to think less of earthly yearnings. Hopefully I wait.

XLII

"And He said, 'She has sinned; let the blameless
Come forward and cast the first stone;'
But they, they fled shamed and yet shameless;
And she, she stood white and alone."

Aileen's Message

Strange indeed and devious are our meetings and partings in the world, Edith. And the most pitiful and strange to me was in finding Alice Heaton in a church recently. I had gone with some friends—one an organist—to a certain church. After practicing a while she struck off into something that caught me, and held me by its spell. The very soul of the music responded to a hidden soul within me, round, full luscious notes that told of heart throbbings, and sorrows in minor tones, ending in little sobbing sounds that went to the depths of my heart. The soft mellow tones like the moaning of the winds among the trees remained when the vivid sparks of the staccato, clear and ripe as they were in fullness and purity, were forgotten.

The music died away in the dusky light of the vast church. As I went out, I saw a woman waver and clutch at a door; a slim, girlish figure that attracted me before I saw her face. I thought she was ill. I saw her tremble, and went hurriedly to her assistance. Soon as she spoke, I knew it was the girl I had seen in the mountains. And knew too, that I was looking into the eyes of Alice Heaton, but so changed, worn and pallid. The pitiful look in her eyes, the unutterable woe that had appealed to me before I knew who she was, was still there, but intensified by the deathlike pallor of her face. My heart was filled with pity for her, and with rage for her destroyer.

This frail trembling child I was sure could never have done wrong, unless led on by a master's hand at deceit and treachery. I took her to her hotel, and her eyes told me more than

her words, her longings to have someone with her. She had no friends, she said. I promised to come again, and hurried away. I wanted to have an hour by myself.

Ruth's rival! The woman who had taken her husband from her! The mother of the little babe in my house! It was all very strange. In some way my life seemed mixed up with horror and tragedy. Yet I had called it a comedy! My part acted with the arch fiend—the man who had wrought all the misery of those two heartbroken women. I could not have believed him capable of such dastardly conduct had not the knowledge been forced upon me.

And then my heart sang a very pæan of delight when I thought of Frank, of his love and trust, and my escape from the network and the meshes of doubt and suspicion that might never have been brushed away but for him. I felt I could not be too thankful for his love and protection. I would not, however, be false to Ruth, if I should see this poor, helpless, grief-stricken girl—and I would go, whatever the cost!

I have been time and again. Her days are few. She has not been able to tell me very much, but the hunted look seems to leave her eyes when I sit with her.

I told auntie about the sick girl and that her name was Alice Heaton. She seemed lost in a reverie for a moment—"Alice Heaton," she mused. "I had an experience once in Santa Barbara with a little girl who said her name was Alice Heaton. I remember well, for I wrote the name down at the time. I paid for some flowers and had then planted on her mother's grave. I have wondered about the child and thought if I ever went there again I would try to find out if she was in the vicinity. She was a beautiful child with blue eyes and hair like yellow silk floss."

"The picture intensified would suit her today," I answered. "But how did you happen to be there and to remember so trivial an incident?"

"It was shortly after your uncle died, and I had gone there for a little time. One day I wandered out to the cemetery. The child's mother had been buried a day or so previous. The grave was bare, and the child had stolen some flowers to put

on her mother's grave. I paid for them. I would not allow her to be disturbed, she was so small and her grief was deep. She said God had not been fair to her mother because there were no flowers on her grave. I did not want her young heart to doubt—it is hard enough to lose faith when one is older."

I kissed the dear old lips—you know how sweet and tender an aunt I have.

"You always were the kindest and best of women," I said.

"It must be a hard-hearted person who would not be kind to a child in distress. And that reminds me, you have never told me why you took the little babe in your home. You are inclined to be generous and kind yourself, in fact, sometimes I fear your generous impulses may bring trouble upon you."

"If so, they will come in a good cause. I will probably tell you the story some time. It is pitiful, and enough for me to know now; but it is to help others I am doing this, and not for myself."

"I was sure of it," she replied.

There were times when I saw Alice—she could scarcely speak; and at others her mind would seem to wander. Like a flash memory would dip into the past—a past that seemed to scorch her heart with its long hidden remembrances. She was on a tideless sea, a wreck drifting—drifting through a gray mist that had no ray of light to guide or cheer her on.

"I once thought love was enough," she murmured; "that its warmth and light would be with me always, but now I see no gleam of light to guide me from the solitary spaces of the dark sea on which I am tossed. He taught me how bright, how beautiful and sweet life was with love as the beacon star, and gave me a glimpse of paradise, and then sent me adrift on the dark waters."

Once she said: "If death is but a forgetting of all things, is it not better? Do you believe in reincarnation?"

"I have not thought very much about it," I replied. "I have faith in the goodness of God. He who knows our needs, knows what is best for us here and hereafter. I believe that all will be well and am not afraid; I try to do what is right according to my understanding and am willing to abide the consequences. I think when we do the best we can for our-

selves and those about us, the law is fulfilled, and it is about all poor human nature can do."

"But if one falls, or is tempted beyond endurance?"

"Then the great Sufferer will know and understand the needs of the tempted," I answered.

"Perhaps," she said, wearily. "But do you know that it seems as if I am not myself at times, as though I were another being. I am searching for something I have forgotten. A memory haunts me, elusive as a dream—something sweet and fragrant that, strive as I will, I cannot grasp. It may be that there was another existence that I knew. I loved someone there, and the other one felt the same sweet thrills and is now searching for me in the wide, wide world. I seem to feel the presence, but am not strong or magnetic enough to make the other conscious of it. This mistake, this woe and agony would not have been mine, had I only found that other one who comes to me often, now that I am weak. I feel that I have lived an unsatisfied life because I could not reach the presence that is yearning for something I cannot define. It is a dim, perplexed feeling that will not be vanquished." She rested her eyes upon the far-off purple edge where sea and sky met, and watched the great yellow sun slip away in the water, as if dipping into another and stranger world she knew not of. Little bits of rosy foam—clouds blown up from the sea, it seemed—flew up and over the high blue sky. A solemn light struck her wistful face, and seemed to rest like a blessing on her beautiful hair.

She roused as if from a stupor and said:

"I have a journal wherein I have written much of my life. I want you to take it. I would like to tell you all and ask you to judge me kindly. I believe you will be just. I have not wanted to do wrong, but if you have ever loved!" she choked, and the great drops welled from her eyes.

"I love and am loved and do not condemn you," I answered.

"You are happy—I knew it! In your great heart, you can find room for pity—for—" she waited a moment—"not for me, I shall not need it now, but there is a little baby—I was not allowed to take or see it."

"I know. Do not distress yourself. I have had it in my home nearly ever since you left Monterey."

"You; you have it! You know!" she gasped and fell back.

After a time I told her all I thought best.

"And you knew this all the time?" she whispered.

"Ever since my return from the mountains."

"And you, being Ruth's friend, have come to me with pity and kindness?"

"Yes, and I will say to you that I know the man far better than you. I know that you are not to blame; and I shall see that Ruth does not wrong your memory, and will promise that she or I will look after the little one and he shall not suffer for the sins of his father if we can help it."

"If you and she can forgive, then surely I may hope for divine compassion, but I do not know; it is all dark and uncertain." Wearily she tossed back the coverings.

"I am so tired—so sleepy," she murmured. Dozing a while—then awakening with a shiver—"I am cold. Tuck me in, mama, closely, and kiss me good night."

The poor earth-worn, earth-soiled and misguided woman forgot, forgot the years and the months of pain and sorrow that had come to her after the ignis fatuus love, that promised her the world's best and fullest, but which was ashes almost before the fires were lit.

Her lost childhood came back with full swing that stretched back for the last time. And she felt her mother's hand soothe her brow and a kiss, forgiving and sweet, as the sleep of death enfolded her and she swung out, over the earth's limit and beyond our uttermost knowledge.

And God, the All of love, of tenderness, knew that as a child she came across the line and death's key closed all that was right and all that was wrong.

"Unclean and spotted from the world."

Yes, but the world and all of its evil was left behind, and the soul went in quest of its Creator, with whom all things are possible.

THE END.

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